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L E T T E R S

T O

A YOUNG CLERGYMAN,

FROM THE LATE

REVEREND MR. *JOB* ORTON.



"He was of a disposition ready to embrace and oblige all men; allowing others to differ from him, even in opinions that were very dear to him; and provided men did but *fear God and work righteousness*, he loved them heartily, how distant soever from him in judgment about things less necessary: in all which he is very worthy to be a pattern to men of all persuasions whatsoever."———*See Archbishop TILLOTSON's Funeral Sermon for the Rev. Mr. THOMAS GOUGE, who was a Nonconformist.*



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TO THE REVEREND
JAMES STONHOUSE, M. D.
RECTOR OF GREAT AND LITTLE CHEVERELL, WILTSHIRE.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

IT is with great pleasure I take this opportunity, of paying a tribute of *public* respect to you. It is now near twenty years since our friendship first began ; which has been a delightful source of pleasure and improvement to me. Mr. ORTON brought us together at first, soon after I began my *clerical career*, and from the kind offices of you *both*, it received an happy direction ; *both* having advised, counselled, cautioned, and encouraged me.* In your parish, Sir, I spent some of my happiest and most useful days ; in a situation favourable to study and self-improvement, among an affectionate, and, in general, a tractable, people. The scene has since been considerably changed : but the respect and good will, which I found among your farmers and cottagers, no length of time will be able ever to efface from my memory.

The greatest part of the Letters, contained in this little volume, were written by Mr. ORTON to me whilst I resided at *Cheverel* ; which I found of considerable *use* to me there, and to the parishes to which I afterwards removed. I had selected most of them from a large number, with
which

* Witness these Letters, and your Hints to a Curate.

which he had favoured me, to be a kind of *Memorial** of their honoured writer, and as a *Manual* for my future use. When I shewed them to you, you were pleased to speak of them as Letters you much esteemed; and when I expressed an inclination of publishing them for the service of my younger Brethren in the Ministry, the design met with your approbation and encouragement. Mr. ORTON hath already appeared in the world under the respectable characters of a commentator, a sermon-writer, and a biographer; and if I introduce him in a new light, as that of a correspondent, I hope, I shall not lessen his merit; the general contents of the following Letters being on subjects of considerable importance: the advice given in them, with respect to the *Pastoral Care*, having been found practicable, (especially in *country parishes*;) and which was the result of his own experience and observation.

To you, Sir, I am inclined, from various motives, to INSCRIBE these Letters of our common friend, which you will be pleased to consider as a testimony of my sincere respect for you.

I am, Reverend and dear Sir, your obliged and most humble Servant,

THOMAS STEDMAN.

SHREWSBURY, April, 1791.

* "For that *pattern* which I saw in him, and for that *conversation* which I had with him, I know how much I have to *answer* for to God. And though my reflecting on that which I knew in him, gives me just cause of being *deeply humbled* in myself, and before God; yet I feel no more sensible pleasure in any thing, than in going over in my thoughts all that I saw and observed in him."—*Bishop BURNET concerning Archbishop LEIGHTON.*—*Pastoral Care*, page 221. *Fifth edition.*

*Extract of a Letter from a Clergyman of the Church
of England.*

Feb. 3, 1791.

——“ I highly approve your design, respecting the publication of Mr. ORTON's *Letters*. The more I see of them, the more I see the utility of such an undertaking. I considered the writer as one of the best men living—judicious, pious, benevolent, and piercingly sensible; a most instructive minister, and a most valuable and faithful friend. I had a particular intimacy with him for at least forty years. By such a publication as you intend, he will, “ being dead, yet speak,” and speak instructively.”

Extract of a Letter from one of the Laity.

——“ I am very glad you have thoughts of printing a number of Mr. ORTON's *Letters*, and shall rejoice, if my earnest wish may determine you to do it. That they will be highly useful and instructive cannot be doubted. He excelled in the easy epistolary manner of writing, as much as in other kinds of composition. I am certain, they will be a valuable present to the public, and shew so excellent and good a man to much advantage; and will be likely to carry on those useful designs, which he had so much at heart.”

1847
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council, viz. the 1st of January 1847. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and are given with the date of admission, and the name of the person by whom they were proposed.

1848
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council, viz. the 1st of January 1848. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and are given with the date of admission, and the name of the person by whom they were proposed.



L E T T E R S
T O
A Y O U N G C L E R G Y M A N.

L E T T E R I.

October 4, 1771.

DEAR SIR,

I AM very glad for Dr. STONHOUSE's
sake, and also for your own, that you
intend accepting the Curacy of *Little
Cheverel*.* The Doctor is a genteel,
good tempered man; truly serious,
rationally evangelical, and judiciously zealous.
He will treat you like a Friend and a Brother,
and you will be much pleased and improved by
his company and conversation. He preaches,
during his residence, twice every Sunday, and has
a Lecture on Wednesday evening. But *ill health*
obliges him to live the greater part of the year at
Bristol, for the benefit of the Waters there. I
could say more of his parish every way, than the
Doctor

* Near Devizes, in Wiltshire.

Doctor chooses to write to you of it himself, because he would not raise too high expectations. I am pleased with the *list of books* you intend taking with you, but you will allow me to add, that I hope you will take some of your *Glosses*, in order to keep up and improve your knowledge of the languages ; especially such as may increase your critical acquaintance with the New Testament.

I am your affectionate and faithful servant,

JOB ORTON.



L E T T E R II.

Dec. 4, 1771.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I COMPLY with your request in writing to you, though I have nothing to say very deserving of your notice. But I am determined there shall be no defect in my friendly regards for you, how many soever there may be in the manner of expressing them.

I was glad to hear of your safe arrival at *Cheverel* ; though it was a mortification to me not to see you in your way thither. You retire to a COUNTRY VILLAGE under some disadvantages, arising from the season of the year, and the agreeable situation you have left.* But you have good reason to believe that you are in the way of duty, following your great Master's directions, and doing his work in that station which he

—hath

* BRIDGNORTH in the county of Salop.—*dulce est natale solum*,

hath appointed for you ; and I have a cheerful persuasion, that you will be made very useful in it. To see this, will add charms to solitude, and pleasure to study and preaching ; and abundantly make up what otherwise you would greatly regret the loss of. Every person to whom your labours prove beneficial, will be a faithful friend to you, and love and honour you as a spiritual father. Though your distance from your good Mother* is a painful circumstance, yet, as she has other dutiful children with her, this will alleviate it both to her and to you. And surely our Master very reasonably requires us to leave father, mother, house, &c. yea all, to follow him. (Matt. x. 37.) And you well know what he promises to those who do it with courage and cheerfulness.

As you preach but *once* on a Sunday, permit me to advise you on the other part of the day, to give your auditory a short, plain and practical *Exposition of the Epistle or Gospel for the day* ; which will be a very useful exercise to yourself—extremely agreeable to the parish—and, if I mistake not, it is required in some of your Canons or Episcopal Directions. (See Canon 49.) Many of our elder Clergy used expounding in the manner I propose ; and Bp. BURNET in his
Pastoral

* Some afflictive circumstances, which afterwards beset this *excellent parent*, especially a paralytic seizure, reminded her children of the following lines of Mr. POPE, which are descriptive of their filial affection towards her :—

Me let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age ;
With lenient arts extend a *Mother's* breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death—
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky.

Pastoral Care, urges long *Texts*, and *short Sermons*, that is, *expounding*.* I suppose Dean STANHOPE's Exposition of the Epistles and Gospels were delivered in public; and also that of HOLE on the Catechism, and others. At other seasons, it may be adviseable to *catechise in public, the elder children and youth*, on that part of the Sunday, when you do not preach, and to *expound* some of the Catechism upon LEWIS's plan, using the helps of some commentators upon it.† And an hour once a week might be profitably devoted to *catechise the younger children*, either in the Chancel of the Church, or at the Parsonage House, which suits you and the season of the year best, to whom you might and must talk plainly and familiarly. You will find this very useful to *yourself*, as well as to *them*; as you will thereby increase a habit of using plain language, and will see how far they understand you, and by what they are most struck and affected. Serious parents will like you for this care and attention to their offspring. I found it of great use.

* See also Abp. HORT's Instructions to the Clergy, p. 24, &c. and Abp. SECKER's Charges to his Clergy.

† I think LEWIS's Explanation of the Catechism, (says Mr. ORTON) is as good as I have seen, (and I suppose is generally preferred by the Clergy) which has gone through a multitude of editions, and is in the Catalogue of Tracts dispersed by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and to be had by any of the Members on the terms of the Society. Dr. ADAMS used to read upon it at his Sunday Evening Lectures upon the Catechism in St. Chad's Church, *Shrewsbury*. Some parts of it are not, I think, well supported by the texts which he advanceth in proof: But they may appear satisfactory to others, though not to me. It may be adviseable for you to procure some commentators; and if you get LEWIS's or any small commentator interleaved, you may add such remarks and reflections from the other, as may be instructive and useful to the children and others, who may attend your catechetical lectures. You will probably make this a part of your evening service, instead of preaching, and it may be equally, if not more profitable to your congregation.

use to encourage the young men of my congregation at *Shrewsbury*, to come to me from eight o'clock to ten on a Sunday evening, and to talk in a friendly manner to them on any useful subject, especially the Sermons of the preceding day. By this practice I learnt much from them—what in a Sermon they did not understand, and what they felt and were improved by in it. No studies at the University can teach this experimental knowledge, this acquaintance with human nature. As I suppose the Doctor hath left you some plain, practical Books to give away among the parishioners, it will be natural to take opportunities of asking them, whether they have read and understood them. By so doing you may introduce some serious discourse, and learn something of their characters, which it would otherwise be difficult to do, without its appearing forced and unreasonable; and they may be led to join in the conversation, or else they may only give you the hearing. The principal difficulty in the pastoral care is to get our people to converse freely, and to open their minds. And there is no judiciously suiting and applying remedies, without knowing the disease, and the patient's constitution; and this, in many cases, can only be learned from themselves. You are, no doubt, duly sensible, that *God giveth the increase* (1 Cor. iii. 6.); and you will act upon that good old maxim, *bene orasse, est bene studuisse*. May God multiply the seed you are sowing in public and private, and increase in you and by you, the fruits of righteousness!

Your

Your desire of my advice in your present situation, must be my apology for the freedom I have taken in this letter. As to any other particulars, I must refer you to Dr. DODDRIDGE's *Life*, and Mr. PHILIP HENRY's,* the situation of the latter in particular, so exactly resembling your own. If you meet with HERBERT's *Country Parson*, pray read it. Probably you may do this in *Wiltshire*, as he was Rector of *Bemerton*, in that county.

I am your faithful friend,

JOB ORTON.

* The fourth edition of which was published by Mr. ORTON in 1765, price 2s. 6d.



LETTER III.

Jan. 31, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

AS a sincere friend to the reputation and usefulness of the clergy, and the honour of our common Christianity, I am an enemy to *Pluralities* in general. But you are so circumstanced, that I see no material objection to your acceptance of the curacy of *Great Cheverel*.† Your sphere of usefulness will be enlarged; the inhabitants of that village and its environs will enjoy your labours, without being exposed to censure for rambling from their own fold, and deserting their established Pastor, who I find is very old, and too infirm to officiate any longer among them. I presume,

† An adjoining parish.

presume, as the villages are so near to one another, all they of *Little Cheverel*, who attend your Sunday Morning Prayers, will, without difficulty, accompany you to *Great Cheverel*; and perhaps will come there with more spirit, as they will be to hear you preach; and they of that parish will be likely to attend your prayers and sermons in the afternoon. This was the case with Mr. JENKS,* while he held the livings of *Harley* and *Kenley* together; and thus he satisfied his own well-informed and tender conscience, and vindicated himself to the world for being a Pluralist. The main thing to be feared (should you accept this curacy) is, lest your proper parish, having no service in the morning, should contract an habit of profaning

* The Rev. Mr. BENJAMIN JENKS (author of the book of prayers, and other practical treatises) was born at *Eaton Constantine*, in the County of *Salop.* Who his parents were, and what their rank in life, is uncertain and immaterial. But he was related to Bishop WILLIAMS, of *Chichester*, to whom he dedicates his Book of Prayers. He was some time Curate of *Harley*, before he became Rector of that parish. On the death of the preceding Incumbent, RICHARD EARL of BRADFORD, patron of the living, hearing Mr. JENKS spoken of respectfully by the parishioners, went one Sunday, in private, to hear him preach; and was so much pleased with his discourse, that he presented him to the living, and made him his chaplain. Mr. JENKS had also the living of *Kenly*, a small village about two miles from *Harley*, at both which churches he officiated alternately, the people of each parish usually attending him. He kept no curate until old age and infirmities obliged him. He preached commonly without notes, and prayed without a form both before and after sermon. "I have heard (says he) Bishops and Dignitaries, and many Doctors and Divines of our church, all very learned and pious, *pray without the book*, both before their sermons and upon other occasions, and with such a rational and raised devotion, as hath been so far from being grating and offensive, that it hath been very instructive and edifying." His people had a high respect and veneration for him; with whom, on proper occasions, he would be very easy and familiar, still maintaining much authority over them. He was remarkable for great candour and moderation towards worthy persons of different religious persuasions; of which, the Editor of these Letters has in his possession some extraordinary

profaning or mispending the Sabbath. But I know you will caution them on this head, and exhort and encourage them to go with you : And I hope and believe, they have such a regard to you and the Doctor, and so much sense of religion, at least decency, that this evil will not arise. Let me entreat you to be *careful of your health*, as walking home after preaching, and your lungs being warmed by exercise, if the air be *cold*, may be injurious to you without great caution. Walking to *Great Cheverel*, when the weather is *hot*, may be equally prejudicial : and returning home late at night from funerals, may be worse than either. I know not what is the custom of those parishes ; but you ought to make a point of having the funerals early. Last night, in the midst of a thick snow and severe frost, our vicar and his curate were burying two corpses after five o'clock by candle light. This ought not to be endured. You will excuse these hints, as young Ministers do not always attend sufficiently to these *minutiæ*.

If you find any serious or teachable young men at *Great Cheverel*, I suppose you will join them to the

extraordinary instances. He preached at *Harley* fifty-six years, and was allowed by the patron to nominate his successor, the Rev. Mr. FAINTER, who resembled him in piety, zeal, and moderation.

Mr. JENKS was married twice, died May 10th, 1724, in his seventy-eighth year, and was buried in the chancel of *Harley* church, where is a neat monument with the following inscription.

Venerabilis Vir. Ben. Jenks.
In hac ecclesiâ per 56 annos
Docendo, vivendo, scribendo,
Animis lucrandis incubuit.
Tandem, Domino vocante,
Servus, bonus et fidelis,
Cælo maturus
Intravit in gaudium æternum
10mo Die Maii, A. D. 1724.
Ætatis suæ 78vo.

the little society, which you have already formed in your other parish, as they will not think it much trouble to come so short a way to meet them. Or, if that cannot be done, perhaps they might be engaged to meet together on a Sunday evening, in their own village, for reading and religious conversation ; especially, if you can find some prudent and experienced Christian there, who will preside over, and assist them.—I submit it to your consideration, whether it would not be advisable to fix on a *stated day weekly* to visit your new flock ; as then they will expect you, and I hope dispose their business so, that they may be more at leisure to receive you. You will, I doubt not, take notice (particular, tender notice) of their children ; inquire if they have learned their Catechism, ask them a few questions in it, which will give you a natural opportunity of dropping some hints of encouragement. In the same view, you will ask them what text you preached on the preceding Sunday, and whether they remember any thing which you then said. This will give you a handle to remind them of what they should have particularly attended to and observed ; engage their attention another time ; and inoffensively admonish and instruct their parents, and others of the family, who may be present ; who sometimes are but larger children in knowledge and understanding, and need *milk* as much as the less. You will sometimes call upon the old Incumbent, shew him all proper respect ; and you may, perhaps, have an opportunity of suggesting a seasonable hint to him, without giving him offence : For many teachers need to be taught.

As

As Providence hath led you into a sphere of *double* service, I have no doubt but you will double your diligence and your prayers : in which I heartily concur, that you may have a double portion of the Spirit of your Divine Master, and that his strength may be sufficient for you.

I hope your zeal in disposing of the books you speak of, was judicious. Some such books, though containing bad divinity, may be curious in an historical view, or throw some light into some parts of antiquity ; and therefore deserve to be read and kept. I have often picked up a pearl from a dunghill, and so am less curious in my choice of books to read, than many others ; and, indeed, than I ought to be, had I less time for reading. Some valuable anecdotes from some very trifling books, have made my sermons more entertaining and instructive than otherwise they would have been : therefore it may be well to run over an indifferent book before it be slaughtered. An *Index Expurgatorius* is a dangerous thing.

I am your faithful friend and servant,
 JOB ORTON.



LETTER IV.

Kidderminster, March 30, 1772.

I AM very sensible of your weight of business : but you will not be disheartened, especially as you will, I hope, more and more see (in the *mercantile* style) that it *answers very well*. You know

know who could do all things *εν Χριστω ενδυναμεντι* *Phil.* iv. 13. and there your eyes will be continually directed. Even St. PAUL could not do without *that*; and *with* that, who cannot do?

I know not what to say about *extemporary preaching*. It may on some accounts be desirable and useful: but I dare not encourage it in *young Divines*. I never knew an instance of it, but the preacher was careless in his studies, slovenly and incorrect in his discourses; and, losing the habit of accurate compositions, could never recover it afterwards. Yet I would by no means desire you to confine yourself entirely to your notes. When a thought strikes you, or something in your sermon seems to strike your hearers, you may add a few sentences, as you find matter arising in your mind: and if you are thoroughly master of your subject, and have a good deal of your sermon, especially the application of it committed to memory, thus much will be easy, and you will not hesitate and appear at a loss. But suppose you preach at your new Church, Sermons which you have delivered at *Little Cheverel* half a year ago; not exactly as wrote, but commit the substance, every leading thought, and the texts that you have introduced into them, to memory, and then enlarge *pro re nata*. Or, you may compose and write out one new Sermon every week, and let it be preached at your churches alternately; and then, on the other part of the day, have, at the other church, your plan, texts, and leading thoughts only written down, and discourse to your people from them. So that each place will have a complete, and a kind of *extemporary*

B 2discourse

discourse alternately. But then, if you do this as it ought to be done, it will very little lessen your labour : For it will require as much pains in studying your plan, texts, and subordinate thoughts, and putting them down, as in writing a sermon at large. But let me caution you, never to venture without a finished discourse in your pocket, lest any indisposition of your own, or circumstance relating to the congregation, should disqualify you for ready conception and utterance. I have known so many Ministers become injudicious and unacceptable by a careless habit of composing, or rather of not composing at all, in their younger days, and in small country places, that I make these concessions, guarded as they are, with fear. The other extreme is best for a young Divine to err in. Besides, there is no way by which you will so speedily and effectually increase your fund of theological knowledge, as by accurate composures. Thus you will study your subject carefully, viewing and examining it on every side ; consulting all the commentators you may have upon your texts and parallel places, and reading what other Divines (whose writings you may be possessed of) have said upon the subject. So that were you to read nothing for a whole week, but what you would read in this method (except History, Classics, &c. by way of relaxation) I should commend your diligence, and say, you had kept to the good maxim, *Hoc age.*

I found lately, in the course of my reading, mention made of a Mr. ROWLAND STEDMAN, a native of *Shropshire*, who, in 1662, gave up his
living

living of 300*l.* per annum, at *Oakingham, Berkshire*, because he could not comply with the terms then required; who was an excellent preacher, and the author of several practical treatises. Is he an ancestor or relative of yours? * I assure you I should think such a Divine and Confessor an honour to my name and family, and I believe you will think it so to yours. Of *another pious Minister* I read, that he found his labours had little effect upon his own parishioners, but much upon his occasional and accidental hearers. Of *another*, that being complained of by a neighbouring Clergyman, for drawing away his parishioners on a Sunday, he answered, “I have preached them here; let him, if he will, preach them back again.” Old Bishop LATIMER told such a complaining Divine——“Feed your flock better, and then they won’t stray.” Such hints as these, from eminent and experienced Ministers, have always a great weight on my mind. In reading the Lives of eminent Men, you will do well to insert in a Pocket-book, or Vade-mecum, any hints of stories, facts, or remarks, which you would wish to remember, or would be proper to quote in sermons or conversation. Unless your memory be much better than mine ever was, you will find this necessary.

I congratulate

* He was born at *Corston* in the parish of *Diddlebury*, in *Shropshire*, 1630; admitted a commoner of *Baliol College, Oxford*, March 13, 1647, and the year following removed to *University College*. In 1655, he took his master’s degree, and soon afterwards became Minister of *Hanwell*, near *Brentford, Middlesex*; where continuing until 1660, he removed to *Oakingham*, in *Berkshire*, and from thence was ejected for nonconformity. He was afterwards Chaplain to PHILIP Lord WHARTON, and died at his Lordship’s seat at *Wobourne*, near *Beaconsfield, Bucks*, Sept. 14, 1673, and lies buried in the church there.—See *Wool’s Athenæ Oxonienses*, V. II. p. 381.

I congratulate you on the *approach of Spring*, when every scene will be enlivened around you, and a country village will become a kind of paradise. It gives me pleasure to think what favourable opportunities of usefulness you will have in your rural walks, to see your farmers and shepherds at work, and talking with them and their servants about their occupations, in an easy and natural way, grafting some religious hints upon it, directing them to spiritualize their labours, and rise to God, and Christ, and Heaven by their common occurrences. And while you exhort them in the words of SOLOMON, to “be diligent to know the state of their flocks, and to look well to their herds,” (Prov. xxvii. 23.) you will, like a good shepherd, take the hint yourself.—May the dews of divine grace be largely diffused into you and your flock, that you may be adorned with all the beauty of Christian graces, and abound in all the fruits of righteousness!

I am your affectionate and faithful humble servant,

JOB ORTON.



LETTER V.

June 10, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

THE death of the old Incumbent of *Great Chieverel*, is an affecting lesson to the laity, but especially to the clergy; which I pray God they may lay seriously to heart. I wish you may be continued in the Curacy, provided the new Rector

Rector should not choose to reside. Fellows of Colleges, who have been many years immured in their colleges, are not always the most fit persons to be Parish Priests; not knowing well how to preach, or converse, or behave to common people; except they have a heart truly serious, and that will make up every other defect in country places.

I am glad you are pleased with the two volumes of CLUBBE'S* Tracts, which I designed for your service, and beg your acceptance of them. His Sermon before the Sons of the Clergy at *Itfwich*, and the Letter to a Young Clergyman, are very excellent. His Tract on Infant Baptism is sensible and clear, and the others are entertaining, and indeed useful; for they expose the folly of many writers, especially on subjects of antiquity, and indeed of some of the Clergy, who spend too much of their time in such studies.

I know not what *History of England* to recommend to you. Some are so large, some so short, and some so partial, it is hard to say which is best, or which is good. A general acquaintance with our history is very desirable. But it is of great importance to be acquainted with some periods of it, particularly the Reformation, Civil Wars, and Revolution. I know none better than BURNET'S *Abridgment of the Reformation*; and his *History of his own Times*. WELWOOD'S *Memoirs* is a good abridgment of our history from James I. to King William. I have heard a good character of GOLDSMITH'S *History*, but have not seen it. But I would principally recommend

* Rector of *Whatfield* in *Suffolk*.

commend to you to get some books of Biography; especially the *British Biography*, which is very full and cheap, and the best thing of the kind I have seen. This will give you a good acquaintance with our history in general, with particular persons and their writings, and above all, will furnish you with many little anecdotes and stories to insert in your sermons, which will entertain and edify your hearers. There is a book which I would recommend to you, as extremely useful in this view, called “*The Triumphs of Faith*,” printed for Dilly—price, half a crown.

I am your faithful friend,

JOB ORTON.



LETTER VI.

August 19, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

I SHOULD have wrote to you long ago, had not my great weakness prevented me, owing to which, I was obliged to drop all correspondence, but what I could carry on in shorthand.

I thank you for your very kind and friendly Letter, and all the encouragements and consolation it suggests. It is not only a proof of your friendship to me, but an evidence, that “the Lord hath given you the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to them that are weary;” * and in that view it gave me peculiar pleasure.

* Isaiah l. 4.

ure. The long continued dry and hot weather we have had, though so favourable to the earth, was injurious to me; weakened my little strength, and quite took away my spirits. I have been in a very languishing state, since the end of *June*. Within a week past I have been considerably revived; though I have, and shall have, returns of my disorder, and my nerves continue in a most shattered condition: nor can I expect they will be much better, until we have cooler weather. My mind hath indeed been in a gloomy state; which I doubt not, as your very kind Letter suggests, is much owing to my corporal disorder: but when eternity seems just in view, conscience awakens and alarms; youthful sins, which have been deeply and daily mourned over before God, appear yet exceeding sinful; and the sins of a professor and a *Minister*, appear peculiarly heinous. A thousand defects and negligences in ministerial work, and especially in the *pastoral care*, appear then *great sins*. You read my writings, and see my outside only; but know not "the plague of my heart," the sad remains of corruptions and sensual affections, distracted, cold devotions, and little, languid love and zeal. Yet it hath been the main business of my life to do good; and I think my governing principle, to serve the Lord Christ. Worldly wealth, honour, pleasure and applause, I never sought. I have been endeavouring to serve my fellow-creatures while I had ability, and have been attempting it in my present state of silence, weakness and obscurity; and though conscious of innumerable imperfections, this affords me some comfort.

comfort. I have sometimes a cheerful hope ; at other times it is weak and wavering, and those fears which have torment, prevail. But in the darkest seasons, I keep looking and crying to God for his pardon and help ; that he would discover to me any latent hypocrisy or sin ; and, if he seeth it good, dart a ray of light and peace into my soul. I place no dependence upon any works or worthiness of my own, but lie at the foot of the cross, as a humble, penitent believer, and fixing all my dependence there.* I write these things partly for your warning, partly for your encouragement ; but chiefly that you may the better know how to pray for me. I wish to *know* more clearly (and he can, if he sees good, *shew* me) how far the body darkens the prospects of the soul, or how far remaining corruptions and failings occasion anxious fears. I daily pray, “ *Shew* me wherefore thou contendest with me.” Job x. 2. And I hope God will not deny a request, which his word and Spirit dictate.

I rejoice

* Sir JOHN HAWKINS, in his life of Dr. JOHNSON, gives us the following account.—“ In a visit, which I made him, in consequence of a very pressing request to see me, I found him labouring under great dejection of mind. He bade me draw near him, and said, he wanted to enter into a serious conversation with me ; and, upon my expressing a willingness to join in it, he, with a look that cut me to the heart, told me, that he had the prospect of death before him, and that he dreaded to meet his Saviour. I could not but be astonished at such a declaration, and advised him, as I had done once before, to reflect on the course of his life, and the services he had rendered to the cause of religion and virtue, as well by his example, as his writings ; to which he answered, that he had written as a philosopher, but had not lived like one. In the estimation of his offences, he reasoned thus—“ Every man knows his own sins, and also, what grace he has resisted. But, to those of others, and the circumstances under which they were committed, he is a stranger : he is, therefore, to look on himself as the greatest sinner that he knows of.” At the conclusion of this argument, which he strongly enforced, he uttered this passionate exclamation—“ Shall I, who have been a teacher of others, myself be a castaway ?”——Life, p. 563.

I rejoice that your bow abides in strength, and that you have any encouragement in your labours. May the Lord increase it!

What glorious Harvest-Weather! I hope you will preach your people a *Harvest-Sermon*. What think you of Isaiah ix. 3. (middle clause) for a text, which plainly refers to the Gospel? See *ver.* 1, 2. The Joy of Harvest great—reasonable, on account of plenty—good weather—freedom from enemies. But Joy of the Gospel greater—better blessings, relating to the soul and eternity—bought and purchased by Christ—freely bestowed, &c. All should rejoice in such a Gospel—especially those who have felt its power. Excuse these hints.

This is the longest Letter I have written for some time: and indeed writing at any time, especially now, is fatiguing to me.

I am, dear Sir, your faithful friend,

JOB ORTON.



LETTER VII.

DEAR SIR,

Oct. 16, 1772.

MY long illness this summer threw me so much behind hand with my correspondents, that I have not yet been able to recover that punctuality, which I should be glad to maintain. I bless God I have been in better health and spirits for three weeks past, than for three months before, and indeed am now as well as I ever ex-

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pect to be. But the wetness of the season is a hindrance to my riding, walking, writing, every thing. My mind is freer from tormenting fears; but either these bad nerves, or something worse, deprive me of those comfortable hopes I wish to enjoy. But the divine Physician, whose regimen is always right, may see it best to keep some of his patients *low*. They may not bear a higher diet. Probably the health of the soul may be best promoted by it; and then all will be well in the issue.

I rejoice in your encouragement in your *Pastoral Visits*. You have, I think, gone as far as you prudently can at first. As your intimacy with your people increases, they will be more open in conversation with you, and then you may properly put particular questions to them. For instance: "Do you *pray* in secret? With a form, and what form? or without?" So as to family-prayer. Your method of *lending books*, &c. is very useful, as it will furnish you with some natural questions about their attention and improvement; which will not appear forced and lugged-in, and so not terrify them, nor appear impertinent in you. It would be well to *pray with families*, wherever you think it can prudently be done; and hints may be dropped in prayer inoffensively, which may shew them their duty. Mr. HENRY saith, "Prayer may preach." And I have often found persons observing and improving such hints, which could not be given in an address to *them* without danger of offence. But caution is necessary here, not to let them see too plainly what you think of their state. This may be dangerous both ways. Petitions ground-

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ed on the treachery of the heart, the frequency and danger of self-deceit, and for divine search, illumination and guidance, are always proper and useful ; except you have reason to believe your friends are established Christians. Even common appellations, as *thy servant*, *thy hand-maid*, may in some cases do harm, as you know, and will know, how prone persons are to catch at any shadow of hope without penitence and faith. *This person*, or *this our friend*, is less dangerous language. It is good to pray particularly for *children* and *servants* in a family. This pleases and edifies them, and may suggest useful hints to them and their superiors ; but to be too particular is wrong. I think it a very useful way to inquire of the *younger* children whether they remember the text of the last Sunday's Sermon, (as their parents should be desired to teach it them :) and of the *elder* children, whether they remember any thing of the Sermon. When they expect such an inquiry, they will be more attentive, and then you may familiarly talk over something of the Sermon with them, particularly what was most suited to their capacity and circumstances. I assure you, I have often learned much from the answers of little children to such queries ; learned what part of a sermon they best understood, were affected with, what kind of sentiments, or language struck them ; and so knew how better to preach to *children*, that is, to nine parts in ten of every auditory ; for so many are children in understanding. *To talk over with them any remarkable occurrence* in the parish or neighbourhood, as the death of a child—sudden death—the season of the year

—or

—or uncommon phenomena—may be useful ; or sometimes to give each a text of scripture (always a short one) to remember and think of against the next meeting, and then talk it over with them ; especially a text suited to any particular failing in them, or circumstance of their family—as against lying, idleness, love of finery, or slovenliness—sleeping at church—or playing on the Sabbath ; or suppose once in a year you were to preach a Sermon to Children, and give notice of it the preceding Sunday—To have your notes with you in the pulpit, yet to enlarge, as occasion may require, is best. When pious, pertinent thoughts arise, pursue them, as far as you find matter flow easily. *Application* is the life and soul of preaching ; warm addresses, according to your hearers' different characters, stations and circumstances will be useful. After your pastoral visits or catechising, *keep hints* of what you learn and observe, which may direct the strain or pointing of your public discourses. Teaching is one of the best ways of learning : and there is in a Minister's work, as in matter, action and re-action. His own soul and his people's will thus be reciprocally influenced. Perhaps nothing is more necessary, than frequently and plainly to caution persons, especially the sick, against *laying an undue stress on the Lord's Supper*, having wrong notions of it, and expecting from it what it was never designed to produce or convey. I have known some worthy Clergymen complaining of their great embarrassment in this respect. And as it is very grievous to have any thing like arguing and disputing with the sick and dying, this should often
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be done in the pulpit and conversation when they are well. But enough of these subjects.

I am truly concerned on account of Dr. STONHOUSE's mournful accounts from *India*, and very tenderly sympathize with him under this severe trial ; knowing how much a person of his delicate frame and irritable nerves, must suffer by so unexpected an event.* But I pray and hope, that God will support him, and enable him still to go on with his Master's work. An accession of *spiritual* children, begotten in Christ Jesus by the gospel preached by him, will be his best relief and cordial under this heavy affliction ; and in the prospect and hope of this, I trust he will persevere. God often calls his Ministers to peculiar trials, that he may exhibit them as examples of patience, meekness, serenity, and even cheerfulness, and lead them to recommend and enforce their public exhortations thereby. It is good to have this in our thoughts in our afflicted seasons, and to do honour to our religion and profession, by a resemblance to our divine Master. To his assistance, compassion, and blessing, I heartily recommend him.

You will do well to make MOSHEIM's *Ecclesiastical History*, translated from the Latin, by MACLAINE, familiar to you, as it is I think the best on the subject : and Dr. JORTIN, who was an excellent judge of a book of that kind, commends it as the most honest, impartial, and comprehensive of any he had met with.

You have my best wishes and prayers for your good success.

I am your affectionate friend, &c.

JOB ORTON.

* The death of his son.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR,

IT gave me great pleasure to receive a Letter from you with so much *short-hand* in it, as it shewed me you had applied closely to it, and that with a little *daily* care you will soon be master of it. You must make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the prepositions, terminations, and symbolical and arbitrary marks, as well as the meaning of the alphabet. You will find it of signal use to yourself in saving time and labour, and making your correspondence with some of your friends more easy ; and for want of it, you are spoiling a good hand, and using yourself to so many abbreviations, that it is not easy to read them. I hope I shall not puzzle you too much with what I now send.

I can add nothing further to what I said in my last about the *manner of praying with families and particular persons*. You can only judge of what is most proper in this respect, from your previous knowledge of their state and circumstances, and from what you learn in conversing with them.—Your method of asking children and grown people whether they remember the *texts* on which you have been preaching the Sunday before, is very proper, and will naturally lead you into some serious discourse with them, and lead them to such answers, as will enable you to form a judgment of their temper and state.

A set of yearly sermons to young people, to parents and children (which you have thoughts of preaching,

preaching, and of which you ask my advice) may probably have this inconvenience attending it, that in a few years you may be at a loss for fresh materials. It may be done very well for a year or two. But it seems to me a better way to introduce these subjects by preaching upon some scripture histories: as for instance, what is said of *Abraham's* commanding his children and household to keep the way of the Lord; of *Joshua's* resolution to serve the Lord with his house; of *David's* instructions to his son *Solomon*, and the like; the early piety of *Joseph*, *Obadiah*, *Jabez*, *Solomon*, *Timothy*, and especially our *Lord Jesus Christ*. These histories are striking, and will at once explain and enforce the duties you recommend; and so with regard to all other relative duties.

Your story of the good woman at *Great Cheverel* is delightful, and full of instruction. It shews how absurd, ungrounded, uncharitable, and wicked it is, to say of parishes and congregations where the gospel, in our view of it, hath not been preached, "There is no religion there—not one serious person—not one pious soul." See John i. 46—48.

Have you ever seen and read *JENKs's Meditations*?* If you have not, I suppose you may borrow them of Dr. *STONHOUSE*. They are very serious and excellent things, on a great variety of subjects; almost each of which contains the substance and heads of a sermon, and will furnish excellent materials for your compositions for the pulpit; though his style is none of the best.

MERIVALE'S

* In two volumes octavo, printed for RIVINGTON, in St. Paul's Church-yard,

MÉRIVALE'S *Daily Devotions for the Closet*,* I have, and think them excellent. The author was a most worthy, learned and pious man, a native of *Northampton*, and of the same class with me at the academy, and afterwards divinity-tutor at the academy at *Exeter*. SANDERCOCK'S *Sermons*, in two volumes, are lively, judicious, serious, and familiar.

Had you looked into your lexicons for the meaning of the word *Chrematistic*, you would have found that it signifies, the art of getting and saving money, from *Χρημα*, money, substance, wealth, &c. *χρηματιστεως* hath a different sense in the New Testament, and means warned of God in a dream. Where you are in doubt about any such words, never rest until you have obtained some knowledge of them. By this method you will increase your stock of learning, and with comparatively little trouble.

I have little to say of myself. I bless God, I am in pretty good spirits, but weak and unfit for any business. The late wet and windy weather hath been prejudicial to me, by hindering my riding, and depriving me of comfortable sleep. But I would be thankful, that I am able to read, and sometimes to write a little to my friends, and so I hope am not quite useless in the world. I greatly want a heart to improve solitude and infirmities better, to feel more of the love of God, and submission to him, and better hopes as to futurity. In this view, I doubt not but you will continue your prayers for me. May the great
Head

* Price, two shillings, printed for BUCKLAND, in Paternoster-Row.

Head of the church increase all your gifts and graces, and make you abundantly useful to all the people committed to your charge !

I am, dear Sir, your's affectionately;

JOB ORTON.

P. S. *November 6, 1772*, which reminds me of the day of the year on which Dr. DODDRIDGE died. The recollection of which event affects me with deep humility, and at the same time with much thankfulness. I wish his *Life* may be of use to you. It cost me immense pains, and helped to break my constitution. But I hope it hath done, and will do, some good ; though *those* who I think on many accounts should have paid the greatest attention to it, have regarded it least.



LETTER IX.

March 27, 1773.

DEAR SIR;

I AM sorry you meet with so much discouragement from your new parishioners. But if you did not expect such, you were too sanguine, and did not sufficiently consider the state of that parish. It was, I suppose, like SOLOMON'S field of the slothful, all overgrown with thorns and nettles, the fences broken down, or out of repair, and all the marks of negligence, and its bad consequences appearing in it. Were you to take a farm in that condition, you would not expect to see it become fruitful and beautiful

ful all at once, or with the utmost pains you could take, in a few months, or even years. But the minds of sinners are more untractable than a neglected farm. The weeds of sin are so many, and have taken such deep root, that it is not easy to eradicate them, much less to destroy the seeds. It is hard to break up the fallow ground of hearts, which has been long uncultivated. *Hosea* x. 12. But the hand of the diligent will in time do great things, and the blessing of the Lord, which will attend it, (if his diligence extends to prayer as well as labour) can break through the greatest difficulties. You will, no doubt, study some awful subjects to awaken and convince obstinate sinners: yet not dwell too much upon these, but try to draw them at times, with the cords of love, and the endearing, striking motives of a glorious gospel. When you hear of any of them behaving ill, you will take an opportunity of talking privately to them. But then, I think it will be best not to enter too largely upon their particular sins and faults, (else they will probably be displeased) but represent to them in general the evil of sin, the temporal, spiritual, and eternal misery, which men are bringing upon themselves and their children by vicious courses; and put into their hand some *little Tract*, against the vice which they are guilty of, or the whole, or part of Dr. STONHOUSE's *Admonitions against swearing, sabbath-breaking, and drunkenness*.* If you have any serious, judicious Christians in either of your parishes, who are acquainted

* Price one penny, or 6s. an hundred. This little tract is in the catalogue of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

ed with those persons who give you so much concern, endeavour to prevail upon them to talk a little seriously to them at proper times : for in many cases, a hint of advice given by one of the Laity hath more effect, and is better received, than when it comes from a Clergyman, as they will think the latter is only acting *ex officio*, and that his exhortation doth not so much proceed from a real concern for their reformation and happiness. You will, I doubt not, consider that your case is the very case in some degree, of every faithful Minister of Jesus Christ. It was the case of the holy Apostles (2 Cor. xii. 20, 21.) and was the case of their Lord and ours himself. And though it shews a right disposition, when a Minister's heart is grieved and humbled in such circumstances, yet he should not be discouraged, but proceed with so much the more vigour in his work, comforting himself with this thought, that God may at length awaken the most careless and humble the most obstinate sinners ; or that something we say to them may stick by them, and produce some good effect hereafter, perhaps when we are removed to another station or another world ; that others receive benefit by our labours ; that all are not disobedient to the word, and unfruitful under our ministry ; and that we shall be a sweet favour to God, accepted and approved of him, in them that perish as well as in them that are saved ; 2 Cor. ii. 15. and that God will reward his Ministers in proportion to their pains and diligence, and not their success. In the mean time, such events are of use to Ministers themselves, to humble them, make them
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more watchful and zealous, and more earnest in prayer for all-conquering grace.*

I am now reading the works of Mr. WILLIAM PERKINS, an eminent Tutor and Divine at *Cambridge* in QUEEN ELIZABETH's reign. They are three volumes in folio, and I have got through one of them. What leads me more particularly to read him was, that his elder brother was one of my ancestors, from whom I am in a direct line, by my mother's side, descended. I think him an excellent writer; his style is the best of any of that age, or the next, and many passages in his writings are equal to those of the best writers in modern times. He is judicious, clear, full of matter, and deep Christian experience. He wrote all his works with his *left* hand, being lame of his *right*, and died about forty-four. I could wish *all* Ministers, especially *young* ones, would read him, as they would find large materials for composition.

* Mr. ORTON once wrote to an eminent Divine of the Established Church as follows.—“You say you do no good by preaching.” This is talking weakly; I had almost used a harder word. Should you not be chided for it?—“Why do you leave off preaching?” said old Bishop LATIMER to a complainer like you? He answered, “Because I do no good, my lord.” The Bishop replied, “That, brother, is a naughty, a very naughty reason.”—You do not know what good you have done, are doing, may yet do, and even after you are dead. No good man preaches; I am confident, without doing some good, and more than he knows of, or will know of, until the great discovering day. To have done our best is moral merit; and God will graciously accept and reward it. What great good did our Master himself do?—“Who hath believed his report?” *Isai. liii. 1.* Who would have thought that you should ever have talked of doing no good by preaching, when God hath done you so much honour already in your ministerial character? I am ashamed of you; and almost angry at you. Labour more, and pray more still. “If the iron be blunt, as SOLOMON says, then put to more strength.” *Eccles. x. 10.* If you begin to be lukewarm, whatever your motive is, it cannot be a good one. I am not clear, that I ever did much *lasting* good in my life; yet I do not repent my attempts. I am humbled and ashamed daily, that they were not more and better. Remember, that *preaching* is of God's own appointment.”

position. He hath some tracts against the Papists; appears to have been a pretty high Calvinist, but he hath many admirable things in *practical* divinity. His works are little known in *England*, but they are still in estimation in *Germany*, many of them being written in elegant Latin, and others translated into German. Some account of his life may be seen in CLARK'S *Lives of Eminent Men*. He was esteemed a Puritan, and met with some difficulties on that account.* As a specimen of PERKINS'S manner, I send you the following quotations. Speaking of St. PAUL'S labouring in vain, he adds, "It may be demanded, what must be done, when the labours of our calling are in vain? *Answer*. We must follow the command and calling of God, whether we have good success or no, and whatever comes of it. Though PAUL feared his labour was vain, yet still he laboured. When PETER had laboured all night and caught nothing, at the command of Christ he saith, at thy word will I cast out my net. And thus to do, whatever follows, is true wisdom and the fear of God. For it must suffice us, that the work we take in hand is pleasing to God, and though it should be in vain with respect to men, it is not so before God. This every man must remember in his place and calling for the establishment of his mind against all events.

"Ministers are to temper their gifts and speech to the condition of their hearers. *The Corinthians*

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* Mr. GRANGER in his *Biographical History* says,—“He was deprived by Archbishop WHITGIFT for being a Puritan. But his great learning, worth and influence made the high party ashamed and afraid to proceed to any violent measures with him.”

were babes in Christ, and PAUL fed them with milk. To the Jews he became a Jew, &c. For this cause, it were to be wished, that *catechising* were more used than it is by our Ministers: For our people are for the most part rude and uninstructed. A sermon to such persons is like a great loaf set before a child. It is no disgrace for learned Ministers in a plain and familiar manner to *catechise*. This is to lay the foundation, without which, all labour in building is vain. In much hearing they learn little, because they know not the grounds of doctrine, that are usual in all sermons. It is a fault in many, that they love to hear sermons which are beyond their reach, in which they stand and wonder at the preacher, and *plain* preaching is little respected of such." You will judge of his style and manner by these quotations. I have lately found in his works, an analysis and harmony of the whole Bible for the use of students at *Cambridge*.

I think I have now paid you in your own coin, and filled my paper to the utmost. If any thing be acceptable and useful to you in its contents, I shall be glad. I am thankful for your prayers, which are mutual. Think of me, as laid aside from public work, and almost useless; and learn from it to work while it is day, before disability comes, or the night, when no man can work. And may God work effectually in you, with you, and by you!

I am your sincere and affectionate friend,

JOB ORTON.

L E T T E R X.

April 17, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

LATELY reading CHAUCER's *Character of a Good Parson*, as published by DRYDEN, and recollecting some things in your last letter about your method of preaching, induced me to transcribe the following lines, and send them to you.

He bore his great commission in his look,
 But sweetly temper'd awe ; and soften'd all he spoke.
 He preach'd the joys of heav'n and pains of hell,
 And warn'd the sinner with becoming zeal :
 But on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell. }
 He taught the gospel rather than the law :
 And forc'd himself to drive ; but lov'd to draw.
 For fear but frightens minds ; but love, like heat,
 Exhales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat.
 To threats, the stubborn sinner oft is hard :
 Wrapt in his crimes, against the storm prepar'd ;
 But, when the milder beams of mercy play,
 He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.
 Lightnings and thunder, (Heav'n's artillery)
 As harbingers before th' Almighty fly :
 Those, but proclaim his style, and disappear ;
 The stiller sound succeeds ; and God is there.

There is much truth and weight in these lines, and my own experience confirms the propriety and importance of attending to them.

I am glad to hear, that you preach to large congregations. But it is not easy to know what good is done by our preaching. If we had not ground to hope, that more good is done, than appears in general, it would be very discouraging. But great modesty, diffidence, or some other principle, prevents our people from letting us know, how they like our sermons, and what good they
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get by them. Besides, we are sowing seed, which may seem lost, but may only lie dormant for a while, yet may grow and spring up and bear fruit hereafter, perhaps some years hence, perhaps not until we are dead. I am glad you do not perplex yourself on this head, as indeed you should not; but while you endeavour to do your duty faithfully, leave the event to God. Yet, as it is very desirable to know what success attends our labours, every prudent method should be taken to know it. This is indeed a very nice point. One cannot make a direct inquiry, whether our services are useful or even acceptable, without appearing vain, and to court applause. Yet it is proper to introduce in your visits, some conversation upon the subject of your last sermon, and to remind the people of it. This may be done without any breach of modesty, and may lead them to open their hearts freely on the subject; and thus we may judge, how far they understood and relished what was said, and whether they were the better for it. And by this means, we may preach over the same truths to particular persons or families in private, perhaps with more force and success than in the pulpit. Among the poor and plain people, you may be quite free and open on this head, and may ask them whether they understood such and such a subject. They will not suspect you of vanity, or any low ends; though probably some of the higher ranks might, among whom vanity is so prevalent. Here wisdom is profitable to direct, and a person may in some measure judge by them of the tempers and characters of those about him.

I was.

I was glad to hear of Dr. STONHOUSE's safe arrival at *Teefon*, after so perilous a journey. I almost envy him the company of Mrs. B. and her agreeable family. Has he told you that he held a conventicle at her house on the Sunday evening? This was in character—being “instant in season and out of season.” I am often comforted by Rom. xi. 2, 4. God hath many *hidden ones*, even among the great as well as the small.

The Book of Devotions, which you saw at my house, was published by WILLIAM AUSTIN, Esq. of *Lincoln's Inn*, who was a Papist in CHARLES THE FIRST's time. You will see his name and a letter to him, in HOWELL's *Familiar Letters*, and some account of him in GRANGER's *Biographical History*. It was reformed and purged from the popish tenets by Dr. HICKS, and afterwards by Mr. DORRINGTON; and great use hath been made of it by many other devotional writers. It contains such noble and sublime strains of devotion, as, I think, are not to be met with any where but in the Bible. So devout may a Papist be. He wrote some other pieces, and died about the year 1638.

Reading lately in one of my old favourite books, (BOLTON) I found in it this remark: That St. PAUL, addressing himself to the *Churches*, wishes them grace and peace from God and our Lord Jesus Christ: but to TIMOTHY, and TITUS, who were young Divines, he wishes *them*, grace, *mercy*, and peace; intimating how much they of all men stood in need of divine *mercy*, on account of the very important office they sus-

tained, and the duties incumbent on Ministers. It is a very useful hint, and deserves serious consideration. I am always glad to hear from you and am

Your affectionate servant,

JOB ORTON.



LETTER XI.

Aug. 24, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS very glad to hear of your safe arrival at *Cheverel*, and of the agreeable circumstances which attended your return to it. The kindness of Providence in *preserving us in our journeys*, and guarding us in our going out and coming in, demands a very serious and grateful acknowledgment, and lays us under fresh obligations to be active in the service of the bountiful and gracious Preserver of men. I need not inform you that there is a wide difference between the formal acknowledgment of the divine care, which is often found even in the worst of men, and that lively gratitude, and quick sense of obligation, which I fear is not often found in the hearts of good men. We are too prone to forget *common* mercies. It is therefore desirable, after a long and various journey, seriously to recollect the several stages, circumstances, and occurrences of it, that we may be particular in our thanksgivings, and more active and zealous in serving our gracious Protector. When I was in my better days, I used to spend about one month

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in a year in visiting my relations in *Warwickshire*, and *Northamptonshire*, being seldom from home at any other time. The Sunday after my return, I generally preached upon some subject, that led me to take notice of the circumstances through which I had passed; and I found these discourses were peculiarly agreeable to my people, and were perhaps as useful as any I preached. As a specimen, I recollect having preached on those occasions from these texts. Psalm xxxv. 10. (former part) Psalm xxxvii. 27. xci. 11. cxvi. 9. Proverbs xxvii. 8, against unnecessary journies and visits.* Isaiah xliii. 2. Daniel v. 23. Acts v. 20. xxvi. 22. xxxviii. 15. (latter part.) Romans i. 11. xv. 29. xv. 32. 2 Cor. vii. 3. xii. 21. Phil. i. 22. 1 Thess. iii. 8. 3 Epist. of John iv. 4. Ibid. 6. You will excuse my mentioning these texts, as you may, perhaps, think it worth your while, if Providence spare your life, to handle some of them on such occasions.

I presume, that after you have considered the *mercies* of your late journey, you have been carefully reviewing the *expenses* of it. And unless you have been more frugal than I used to be, have found the expense hath been great; and some articles have been incurred, which ought to have been avoided. Excuse me, my dear Sir, if I should have any fears about you, lest you should contract an habit of not calculating, or forgetting, what it will cost you, to gratify the feelings of good nature, to indulge your fancy, or to please your relations and friends. And let me

* This Sermon is printed in his two Volumes of Discourses on Practical Subjects. See Vol. II. Dis. 2. Price, six shillings.

me beseech you to labour this point with all your might, to keep exact accounts of all your expenses, especially to mark all superfluous and unnecessary articles, and to keep a strict guard upon your conduct and inclination. It will require no little resolution and self-denial to do this, and to act as such a calculation and recollection will suggest to you that you should have acted. I have known instances among your Clergy and ours, of those who have, by thoughtlessness and want of keeping accounts, exposed themselves, their profession and function, to contempt, and thereby greatly lessened their esteem and usefulness. Shall I mention to you a recent instance of this kind, which presented itself to me but the last week? Our good friend Mr. R * * * came here to represent the case of a dissenting Minister of his acquaintance, who hath always been an easy tempered, thoughtless man, who had not courage and self-denial enough to say, "NO, I cannot afford it," when he should, and might justly and honourably have said it. He hath a wife, many small children, and is so deeply in debt, though he hath a pretty good salary, that unless his friends can help him, he must go to gaol, lose his place, salary and usefulness, and his wife and children come to the parish. I hope Mr. R * * * will get him money sufficient to set him free from his present difficulties. But, I fear, though he promises very fair, that he is one of that sort, of whom SOLOMON says, *If thou help him, thou must do it yet again.* Prov. xix. 19. There needs no application of this melancholy story, but the old adage, "Happy is he, whom
other

other men's harms do make to beware." I know you will excuse these hints from a friend, who interests himself sincerely and tenderly in all that concerns you, and would not have your good to be evil spoken of, or your usefulness any way lessened. I hope, therefore, you will particularly attend to that part of the good man's character, that *he guides his affairs with discretion.* Psalm cxii. 5. and *gives no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.* 1 Tim. v. 14.*

One

* The first virtue which appears to me of importance (says Mr. PALEY) is *frugality*. If there be a situation in the world in which profusion is without excuse, it is that of a young Clergyman who has little beside his profession to depend upon for his support. It is folly—it is ruin—Folly, for whether it aim at luxury or show, it must fail miserably short of its design. In these competitions we are outdone by every rival. The provision which Clergymen meet with upon their entrance into the church is adequate, in most cases, to the wants and decencies of their situation, but to nothing more—To pretend to more, is to set up our poverty, not only as the subject of constant observation, but as a laughing-stock to every observer. Profusion is ruin: for it ends, and soon too, in debt, in injustice, and insolvency. You well know how meanly, in the country more especially, every man is thought of who cannot pay his credit; in what terms he is spoken of—in what light he is viewed, what a deduction this is from his good qualities, what an aggravation of his bad ones—what insults he is exposed to from his creditors, what contempt from all. Nor is this judgment far amiss. Let him not speak of honesty, who is daily practising deceit; for every man who is not paid is deceived. Let him not talk of liberality, who puts it out of his power to perform one act of it. Let him not boast of spirit, of honour, of independence, who fears the face of his creditors, and who meets a creditor in every street. There is no meanness in frugality: the meanness is in those shifts and expedients, to which extravagance is sure to bring men. Profusion is a very equivocal proof of generosity. The proper distinction is not between him who spends and him who saves, for they may be equally selfish; but between him who spends upon himself, and him who spends upon others. When I extol frugality, it is not to praise that minute parsimony which serves for little but to vex ourselves and tease those about us; but to persuade you to *economy upon a plan*, and that plan deliberately adjusted to your circumstances and expectations. Set out with it, and it is easy; to retrieve, out of a small income, is not impossible. Frugality in this sense we preach, not only as an article of prudence, but as a lesson of virtue. Of this frugality it has been truly said, that it is the parent of liberty, of independence, of generosity.

Advice addressed to the Young Clergy.

One of my young friends, who hath been at *Oxford*, at the installation of Lord NORTH, as Chancellor of that university, spent a day or two with me last week, and shewed me a very great curiosity. It is a circular letter addressed to the Clergy by one Dr. TRUSLER, who lives in *London*; containing proposals to furnish them with sermons from our best Divines, and some never published nor preached, at one shilling for each sermon, engraven on copper-plates, that they may look like a manuscript, and that persons, who can see the Preacher's notes from the gallery, may suppose them to be his own hand writing. This is a new and fine contrivance, and what a Clergyman (who wants no such helps) properly calls, "An help for the lame and the lazy." *

Since I began this Letter, a friend, who hath been at *Hagley* some days, informs me, that he thinks Lord LYTTLETON can live but a very short time. I do not find that he has any apparent bad disorder, but is sinking under the weight of domestic sorrows. So little can his wealth, honour, title, palace, park, literary reputation, and high character throughout *Europe* support him under his afflictions. What a melancholy

proof

* But hark—the Doctor's voice—

He hails the Clergy; and, defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zig-zag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gall'ry critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware!
Oh name it not in Gath! It cannot be,
That grave and learned Clerks should need such aid.
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before,
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the Church.

COWPER'S Task, first published in 1785.

proof of the truth of SOLOMON'S observation, that *all is vanity*.*

I have lately sent a small tract to the press, containing *Three Discourses on Christian Zeal*, which I shall beg your acceptance of as soon as they are published. I shall be thankful if Providence makes me an instrument of doing good in this way, while I am disabled from appearing in the pulpit. I heartily wish you success in all your pious and benevolent attempts to do good, and am,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend, and humble servant,

JOB ORTON.

The Lady's verses upon Dr. S***, are pretty. But he will not plume himself upon them. Allowance must be made for the *poetica licentia*. The compliments of our friends do us no harm, but good, when we improve them by vigorous endeavours *to be* what they suggest we *already are*.



LETTER XII.

Nov. 5, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

I AM very glad to hear that you have come to a resolution to have nothing further to do with Mr. * * * * in the way of correspondence or intimacy. And I hope you will extend your resolution to all men of that sort, be they ever so pious and zealous. My *reason* for this advice is plain. You are not likely to do Mr. * * * * *any good*.

* His Lordship died the next day.

good. There is no mending *wrongheads*, especially when they are influenced by what they think a zeal for God, and imagine that their good intentions will justify, and even sanctify, all their imprudence and irregularities. You never can make him see that he is acting wrong and imprudently. You may *confute* such men, but you can never *convince* them. Another substantial reason, why you should decline all correspondence with him is, that you will be likely to be a *sufferer* by him. Not that I suppose he will corrupt you, or lead you into any of his irregularities; but these sort of Divines will never be easy, except those, who they think are pious, will join in their measures and approve them. If you join in them, you hurt your own credit and usefulness, and the peace of your own mind; and your name and example will be considered and quoted as a sanction for all their irregularities. If you do *not* join in them, they will censure and misrepresent you, yea, and treat you worse than they would a meer formalist. I have seen many instances, and felt some of the effects of this kind of zeal, though it no way hurt me. Several Preachers of this stamp, with whom I had not the least acquaintance, and never saw until I came to this town, used to call upon me, supposing me, I imagine, according to their ideas, to be sound in the faith, and a well-wisher to their designs. But when they found I would not run all their lengths, and discouraged their proceedings, (especially their rash and uncharitable way of speaking and judging of *others*, particularly their censures of *all* the Clergy, who were not *Calvinists*,
however

However pious, worthy and useful) they began to think *evil* of me, and now, to my great satisfaction, I see none of them. I shall not forget the advice which a venerable old man of Northampton, with his point-collar-band, once gave me concerning such persons, "Neither bless them at all, nor curse them at all."*

Mr. ****, the Rector of **, is undoubtedly a man of good sense and abilities, but he appears to me to think these things have nothing to do with religion. I once saw one of his sermons, in which were some good and striking remarks, but little or no judgment. The subject of it was, concerning the *Influences of the Holy Spirit*; but he quoted a variety of texts at random, most of them only applicable to the *Apostles*, as a slight attention to the context would have shewn him, but he applied them *without distinction* to all *true Christians*, and from thence he drew many absurd consequences, and injudicious hearers might have drawn a great many more.

I cannot think Mr. **** at all justified in his excursion to B **, because he thinks the proper Minister of that parish is negligent in the discharge of his duty. If that were a reason for transgressing all rule and order, it would hold good in so many cases, as would produce universal confusion and disorder. *Another* Clergyman may think it his duty to go into neighbouring parishes to preach against the *Methodists*, or those that are so called. *Another* might go and preach

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* "If such preachers do good, I shall rejoice, and say of them as Mr. PHILIP HENRY did of LAMBERT's soldiers, "Lord, own them, if they truly own thee."

against the *Athanasian Creed*, or some other parts and passages of the *Liturgy*, as several of them have lately and warmly written against them. And what disturbance, uneasiness and mischief would be the consequence of such a conduct. If it is vindicable in Mr. ****'s case, it is vindicable in others, and all parish order and regularity would be at an end. Even St. PAUL himself, with all his apostolic authority and endowments, would not go into *another man's line*. See 2 Cor. x. 12, to the end of the chapter. Where you may see what St. PAUL was, and what Mr. **** and every wise Clergyman ought to be. God is the God of order, and not of confusion, in all the Churches of the saints : and it is our rule to do all things decently and in order.

My *Book of Sermon-Plans*, which you desire an account of, was kept without much order. Having procured a proper book for the purpose, I divided each page of it into two columns. When any text of Scripture struck me, which I thought it necessary to preach upon, I wrote it at the top of the page, between two red lines, and left the whole of that column, to add a division, thoughts, texts, anecdotes, &c. that occurred in thinking of it, and in the course of my reading. And then, when I was at a loss for a text, I had recourse to this book. In reading practical writers, especially Mr. HENRY's Commentary, I found many texts, and plans upon them, which I inserted there ; and I added a reference to the authors, if the books were my own, where I might find some illustration of them : if the book belonged to some other person, I then transcribed the hints into the book of plans.

I was

I was much concerned to hear of the death of Mr. LOVE,* Dr. STONHOUSE's Curate at *Bristol*; which is a great and irreparable loss to the Doctor and to the church, as he was an admirable preacher. Considering his truly serious, and at the same time his rational and catholic disposition, his removal, especially in the morning of his days, is very much to be regretted. The Doctor is deeply affected with the event. † What a different figure will such a man make in the other world to those Clergymen, who may fill up some of the higher offices of the church; who, perhaps with much learned lumber in their heads, neglect their duty, devote themselves to luxury and dissipation, and take pains to lessen the credit, influence and usefulness of those, who make it the labour and end of their lives to save themselves and those that hear them.

I desire to bless God, that my spirits have been tolerably good for some weeks past, though not without

* Mr. LOVE was a Fellow of *Balial College, Oxford*, Master of Arts, and one of the Minor Canons, of *Bristol Cathedral*. He was Curate to Dr. STONHOUSE for some years, when he was *Lecturer of All Saints in Bristol*, and died October 18th, 1773. Aged 29.

† Dr. STONHOUSE made a collection from a few friends, and erected a very elegant Monument to his memory, in the Cathedral at *Bristol*, and prevailed with Miss HANNAH MOORE to write the following Epitaph.

When *worthless* grandeur fills th' embellish'd urn,
No poignant grief attends the sable bier;
But when *distinguish'd* excellence we mourn,
Deep is the sorrow, genuine the tear.

Stranger! should'st thou approach this awful shrine,
The merit of the honour'd Dead to seek,
The Friend, the Son, the Christian, the Divine,
Let those who knew him, those who lov'd him, speak.

Oh! let them in some pause of anguish say
What zeal inspir'd, what faith enlarg'd his breast;
How soon th' unfetter'd spirit wing'd it's way
From earth to heaven, from blessing to be blest.

without some depressing intervals. I am seldom free from pain, but I would be thankful that it is not violent. May God enable you to improve health and vigour while it continues, that you may have comfortable reflections and agreeable prospects, when the days of darkness come upon you, which may be many. Continue your good wishes and prayers for, dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend, and faithful servant,

JOB ORTON.



LETTER XIII.

Dec. 28, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

IT gives me pleasure to find that Dr. STONHOUSE'S *Prayers*,* and his little *Treat on the Sacrament*,† meet with such encouragement, and I hope they will do much good. I wish by your public and private addresses, you may be able to lead your parishioners and neighbours to the daily serious use of the prayers. And as the Doctor hath sent some of them for you to distribute to every house in his parish, it will afford you a favourable opportunity, when you give them the books, of talking seriously and closely to them on the subject; and in your future visits of renewing the discourse, by inquiring what use they have

* Prayers for the use of private Persons, Families, Children, and Servants. The twelfth edition, price four pence. This book is in the Society's Catalogue for promoting Christian Knowledge.

† A Short Explanation of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The eighth edition, price three pence.

have made of them. But there is danger of their resting in the mere form, the *opus operatum*, just in reading the prayers, without due seriousness and solemnity, and taking pains to impress the sentiments, and excite the desires they contain, in the heart. I fear we all fail in this respect, and whether we pray *with* or *without* a book, we do not feel the good sentiments we utter, nor warmly desire the blessings we ask.* At least I find it so with myself, and fear it is so with others, else I think their prayers would have a visibly better effect on their tempers and lives, as all sincere prayers are certainly adapted to have, as well as to engage divine assistance. I hope you will find the good effect of your addresses to your people on this subject. It affords me great pleasure to hear of the interest you have in their esteem and affection. No good can be done by a Minister, until that point is in some measure gained, and then, he may hope to draw them with the cords of love. Hos. xi. 4. It is not to be expected in the nature of things, that men should become quite good all at once. Various methods must be tried, and long patience exercised; especially with those who are grossly ignorant, or have indulged themselves in long habits of sin, negligence, or formality. You see how your farmers manage the ground, which they till; what various methods they take, suited to the different soils—what repeated trials—how long they wait. This will both instruct and encourage you in your

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spiritual

* Consider well each petition as you offer it up; and if you have not been sufficiently attentive to it, repeat it again and again until your heart accompanies the word. See Dr. Stenhouse's *Every Man's Assistant*, page 181. Second edition, price three shillings.

spiritual husbandry. And you need not be informed who gives both the common and spiritual farmer the increase. But after all, there is very little hope of doing any good upon old sinners, especially formalists.* You will therefore bend your principal attention to the *rising generation*, where you will find the heart more impressible. Be prudently familiar with them. Give them a short hint whenever you see them in an easy, pleasant path, without the formality of a solemn address. I know by experience, that *such hints* will often abide and do good, while a direct, long, though *serious address*, will not be regarded. You will be more likely to be useful to them, as being young yourself. For *young* people are ready to suppose, that *aged* Ministers warn and caution them against many indulgencies and follies, because they are grown past a capacity of relishing them *themselves*. This makes it very desirable that *young* Divines should take particular pains with *youth*. It will require some care and prudence to keep up the dignity of your station and character amidst such methods of addressing to youth. But it requires less in your situation, than if you had young gentlemen and ladies to deal with. You never will forget the exhortation, "Feed my lambs." John xxi. 15.

I am obliged to you for your extract from the preface to ORR's Sermons. † It shews an excellent

* Jer. xiii. 23.

† The passage referred to above is as follows.—"As the Author hath now got into a period of life, and state of health which will not permit of his being much more useful, nor probably of his continuing much longer in the present scene; he thanketh God, that under increasing infirmities of body, and an apprehension of his approaching dissolution,

cellent spirit, and very much suits my own case. Whether I have been the instrument of much good I know not. I have not seen those good effects of my ministry, which some Ministers have had, at least in the conversion of sinners. There were *few*, if *any*, of my congregation, who were profligate and abandoned; and whose conversion, when that happens, is very remarkable, and engages much attention. I hope many aged persons have been edified by my services, and not a few young people trained up in sentiments of wisdom and piety; who are now useful in their families and stations, and ornaments to religion. Indeed, I lay very little stress upon what some Divines call *conversions*; I have seen so many instances of their coming to nothing; or, that their converts have only been converted from the sins of men to the sins of devils, from drunkenness and debauchery to spiritual pride, bitterness and uncharitableness; and this I cannot call a saving change. I see little alteration for the better in the conduct of *many*, who have been *said* to be converted. I am cautious of calling any thing by that name, where there is not a regular, consistent conduct following

dissolution, he possesseth his soul in patience and serenity, and hath the most sincere consolation and joy, from a reflection on his having laboured for by far the greater part of his life, with at least an honest zeal and assiduity, in the service of religion. He cannot, indeed, flatter himself with the thoughts of having been actually the author of much good, by all his pains and diligence; but of a hearty good-will to the best of causes, and of well-meant endeavours to have served and promoted it, he is fully conscious. And upon this foundation, notwithstanding his defects and failings, of which he is very sensible, and which are the matter of his unfeigned humiliation and mourning, he presumeth to look up, with an humble hope, to the Supreme Judge of his conduct, and Arbitrer of his fate; waiting for his mercy, through Jesus Christ, unto eternal life. *Amen.*" Preface to the Sermons of the late Rev. JOHN ORR, D. D. Archdeacon of *Ferns*, in 2 Vols. Prepared for the press by the Author, Printed for CADELL, 1772.

ing it. Hasty impressions, which some Ministers are very ready to observe and admire, are often lost in a little time, and those who have been under them become worse than they were before. I have no idea of conversion, as passing a certain line, and then getting into a saving state. Conversion *is a work of time*, and I see *no right* we have to say any are converted or become good, until one hath *a longer* season of trial, to observe whether they *continue* stedfast in the practice of righteousness, and act in every circumstance and relation, in the main, consistent with the demands of the Gospel. I wish you may have the pleasure to see many such converts.

I thank you likewise for your hint about Mr. THOMAS, in the account given of him by CALAMY. I have read it often, and transcribed some passages from it into the blank leaf of the Bible, which always lies upon my desk, particularly the following. “Si non concedatur ut præco sim publicus, sim tamen operarius: quod publice non possum, faciam, [ut licet, valet] privatim. Quod non possum prædicando, prestem scribendo. Auxiliare, Domine, servum senilem.” Mr. THOMAS was an excellent man, yet Mr. NELSON in his life of Bishop BULL, who spent some time in THOMAS’s family, insinuates that the Bishop had no advantage there. Such was that good man’s *bigotry*.

If you have not gotten the Abridgment of BAXTER’s *Saints Rest*, by Mr. FAWCETT, of this town, pray get it; as I think it a very good practical book, and may be useful to lend to your parishioners. I revised the manuscript, compared
it,

it with the original, added, altered, and left out, and have the vanity to think I improved it; though I wish now I had made more alterations in the phraseology. BAXTER (notwithstanding what you may have heard to the contrary) was so far from being a *republican*, that he refused the engagement; opposed CROMWELL's measures and his party, and told him to his face, that "They (meaning the soberer Presbyterians) esteemed their kingly government a blessing, and knew not what they had done to forfeit it." To which CROMWELL answered, "God hath changed it, as he pleased."

I know how to pity you in your dull situation; as mine is altogether, or nearly, as dull as your own, especially this winter season. I am mostly confined to the house, have very little company, and on some bad days, hardly *see the human face divine*. But I can take pleasure in my good books. I converse mostly with the *dead*, and that is the fittest converse for one, who is in a manner buried alive, and is literally *near the grave*. I wish to gain *spiritual* good by this converse, and to grow more "meet for an inheritance among the saints in light." I should vastly prefer *Cheverel* to the bustle, hurries, luxury, and dissipation of the city you have been lately visiting. An aged Minister who used to go from his country obscurity, once a year, to visit some relations in *London*, would never stay above two or three days with them; and when solicited to prolong his visit, used to say, "No, I'll go to my country retirement; for you are all mad—mad upon the world and pleasure."

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I am much obliged by your devout remembrance of me, and beg the continuance of it. My spirits are so weak and broken, that my best duties are extremely languid and defective. I rejoice in the merciful Advocate, whom the Father heareth always.

I am, dear Sir, your affectionate and faithful
friend, and humble servant,
JOB ORTON.



LETTER XIV.

April 24, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE long been so very weak and low, that I have had neither strength nor spirits to write any thing, but what was absolutely necessary. I bless God I am at present a little recruited. My spirits have been better, but my strength is still very small, and I am fearful of applying to any business, or even sitting down to write, lest it should throw me back again into weakness and nervous complaints. However, I must venture to send you a few lines; the confusion and interruption with which they are written may not make them less acceptable to you. My spirits have been greatly depressed, and a constant, painful sensation in every nerve and fibre hath wasted my flesh, and filled my mind with sensations exquisitely more painful than those of the body. I thank God, I have this last week been more comfortable, have got some refreshing sleep,

sleep, and am more easy and cheerful, though I still find myself very weak, and unfit for any active service, much less for any thing like study. I desire to be some way or other serving and glorifying God, but how this can be done in such circumstances as mine, at least by me, it is not easy to say. But Providence hath wise and gracious ends to answer by our afflictions, even those which incapacitate us for those services to which we are strongly inclined, and for which we have some proper qualifications. We are often, and indeed almost always, at a loss, when we set ourselves to judge of the reasons of the divine conduct. Our duty is submission : * but that is not easy to be practised, nor can it be maintained as it ought to be, without a *supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, which I wish may be more abundantly shed abroad into our hearts. You need it very much in your ministerial capacity ; and considering that station in which Providence hath fixed you, to quicken you to the duties of it, and to reconcile you to its inconveniences and disagreeable circumstances ; which I should think would be easily borne by a good man, who hath health and spirits, and forms a just estimate of the worth of souls, the great business of life, and the duties of the ministerial office.

I have just been reading a volume of sermons written by a Dr. HOPKINS, formerly a Prebendary

* I wish to be content, as a patient, waiting servant. St. PAUL styles himself, a servant, a minister, and an apostle of Christ, while *in prison*. I have lately been comforted with this passage from an old writer. "One act of silent submission, and a quiet application to those duties, which are immediately necessary, though neither easy nor honourable, is of much more value than a long train of activity and zeal in a public and visible sphere of action, sweetened by reputation and applause." Nov. 29, 1781.

dary of *Worcester*, published by the famous Dr. HICKS. In some account of his life prefixed to it, he observes, “ That he went every Saturday fourteen long dirty miles from *Worcester* to a small country parish, believing that Christ paid the same price for the poor as the rich, the cottager and the courtier, and that a faithful Pastor, who truly endeavoured to save the soul of the meanest ploughman, would have as great a reward from his Master, as he that laboured to convert the greatest emperor in the world.” He would say, “ That a Priest was not to value his parish for the revenue or the quality of the people in it, but purely as a cure of souls, as a vineyard, in which he was God’s husbandman : that as large and as acceptable a return of his labours might be made from a country-cure, as from a parish in a royal city, and that a good sermon, by God’s blessing, would be the power of God to salvation in a church, where there was not a sword or a diamond to be seen, as where coaches crowded about the church door.”

I wish ** ****’s insertions in the newspapers from my Letters may be of service to the readers. We do not know what good we do. A young physician of considerable reputation and fortune (Dr. BOSTOCK) died lately at *Liverpool* of a violent fever. A little before his death, he told the Minister who attended him, and who is a friend of mine, that he had received great and lasting benefit in his religious interests, by reading some letters of mine, to my nephew, when they were fellow-pupils together at the academy. I had no idea, that he or any one else had seen such letters.

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But I am thankful he did, since they were attended with such an happy effect.

I am truly concerned, that you have under your pastoral care any flagrantly disobedient to the laws of Christ. But what Minister *hath not such under his care?* There was a traitor in Christ's family. Young Ministers are apt to set out with expectations raised *too high*, and expect *more* encouragement and success than they are ever likely to find. "*Old Adam* will be too hard for young MELANCTHON," as that venerable reformer complained, after he had been some time a preacher, and had great expectation from his zealous ministry.

I hope you will have some very comfortable and improving weeks with the Doctor and his family, during his residence at *Cheverel*, which you must set against many uncomfortable and dreary ones in the winter. I wish the Doctor would ride on horse-back every dry day, as I do. *Recipe caballam*, is his best prescription. Surely he might meet with some gentle, easy horse, no matter how ill-shaped and ugly, that might carry him safely about the fields of *Cheverel*. I remember an aged gouty Minister, who could not walk; and having a large garden, he used to ride often round it in a day upon an old steady horse, who used to count his rounds for him; and then, when he had completed them, would stop and proceed no further, though the rider tried every persuasion and pungent argument to excite him. I heartily wish and pray for his health and continual usefulness.

Continue your good wishes and prayers for me. I want more clearness and satisfaction as to the great concern. My prayers are so broken, and attended with so much distraction and impertinence, that they are uncomfortable to myself, and can hardly be acceptable, even with all the gracious allowance of the Gospel. But I do not love to trouble my friends with my complaints, any further than to desire and direct their petitions.

Yours affectionately,

JOB ORTON.

Pray prevent your friend Mr. ** from buying me any of the castor-oil he spoke of, as I have met with some in this town, and have laid in a good stock of it. This is something like HOBBS, with his new frieze-coat at ninety-six. "This, said he, will last me three years; *then* I will have just such another." But I am no *Hobbist*.



LETTER XV.

July 22, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

I AM very glad to hear, that you are getting upon a *plan of economy*. You will find great comfort and benefit by attending to it diligently and daily, and making the errors of one day and week a check upon the expenses of the next. A man must deny himself many agreeable circumstances and indulgencies, if he would keep within the compass of a moderate income, especially

especially if he would save something, as all young men, particularly single men, ought to do. I think no man living ought to spend *the whole* of his income, but make some provision *yearly* for contingent and necessary expenses. In this view, I have found it absolutely necessary to avoid taking some journies, buying some books, or particularly expensive cloaths, which otherwise I should have liked. An error on the *saving* side is by far the best, as being most for a man's (especially a Clergyman's) reputation, interest, and usefulness. Besides, minds formed to a benevolent turn, and which are ready to pity, assist, and relieve the distressed, will be often, without the utmost frugality, brought into a very disagreeable situation; either to withhold their charity, and thereby hurt their judgment and inclination, or to leave some debts unpaid beyond the proper time, or to solicit their income before it is due; either of which will be very injurious to their credit and character, and the acceptance and success of their ministry. Considering your natural disposition, you ought to read WATKINSON *on economy*, (price four-pence) at least once a quarter, until you have not only imbibed his maxims, but brought yourself to an habit of acting upon them, and never for a single instance, or in the value of a penny, swerving from them. There will be another great advantage in your case attending this. It will habituate you to foresight, a care to remember, and consider, and calculate times and expenses, especially before you go from home. It will dispose and habituate you to get your sermons ready in time; and

in short, have a most happy influence on your health, fortune, and reputation. That remark hath been sealed by the ruin of thousands for both worlds, *He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little.* (Eccles. xix. 1.) I hope you will excuse the freedom with which I write to you upon this subject, as your comfort and usefulness lie near my heart.

I shall, I believe, read no more of the controversy your letter speaks of; as I am tired with such idle and endless debates. BAXTER said in his old age, “I have done with these debates and speculations. The Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments content me, and are my daily meat and drink, and have been so to many other aged Divines and Christians.”

But these controversies are no new things; they are as old as Christianity, and were foretold in it; and therefore should be no stumbling-block to any. The things so much disputed about are not and cannot be fundamentals. Let Ministers dwell upon the plain things of the Gospel: and preach indisputable doctrines practically, and moral duties evangelically.

I shall be glad to see Dr. STONHOUSE’s *Hints to a Curate*; * and wish they may do much good.

I bless God, I have been in better spirits for the last fortnight, and been able pretty nearly
to

* This useful treatise was first published in 1774, when the Editor of these Letters was the Doctor’s curate. Second edition, price six-pence. An eminent Dignitary speaks of it in the following manner. “It is as seasonable and useful a thing as any the Doctor ever published. And though much of his plan may be impracticable in large parishes, yet many of the hints may be well adopted in all places: and the Clergy in general have all something to learn from it.” One of our present Bishops gives this to every one whom he ordains.

to balance accounts with my correspondents, and to do a little in revising some sermons, which I mean to publish. But I cannot do much at a time. Many hours, and some whole days, I am quite laid aside as useless, and often in great pain and weakness. But having obtained help of God, I continue to this day; and blessed be his name, have some intervals of ease and cheerfulness, which I hope are employed to some valuable purposes. But notwithstanding all this favourable discipline, and this mixture of mercies and afflictions, which I have experienced for so many years, I find very little improvement in the divine life. I feel much languor and deadness at those seasons, and in those circumstances, when I ought to be most serious, lively, and attentive, and cannot raise my groveling heart to that spirituality and heavenly mindedness, which is so desirable for one who is on the borders of the grave. My thoughts cling too much to earth, empty as it is, and to this body, from which I have suffered, and am daily suffering, so much pain and uneasiness. I entertain myself in reading my good old books, in which there is a favour and a suitableness to my case, which I find in few modern ones. I have been reading for a fifth or sixth time Dr. LUCAS's *Inquiry after Happiness*, and his other pieces, which always afford me new pleasure. I pray God to assist and prosper you in all your undertakings for his glory, and the edification of the church, and beg the continuance of your prayers for me that I may be doing some little good, while I am continued here, and be growing more and more meet for a nobler sphere of service, when

my Master calls me hence. I am always glad to hear from you, and am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate and faithful friend,
and humble servant,
JOB ORTON.



LETTER XVI.

Jan. 14, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

AT this *season of the year*, it is usual for all wise and prudent people to settle their accounts, to pay their debts, and to leave none outstanding. But it is the unhappy case of some, who bear an honest mind, and are willing to be out of debt, not to be able to be so. This is at present, and is often, my own case with regard to my epistolary correspondents. Not for want of an honest mind, or a real affection to my friends, but through inability. I have long been a bankrupt in my health, strength and spirits, and must throw myself upon the compassion and kindness of my friends to bear with me and excuse me, and I hope they are, and will be willing, to accept of a composition, and to take a part of what I owe to their friendship in lieu of the whole. I have no reason to suppose, that you in particular will be an unmerciful creditor, and therefore must beg your acceptance of a small composition for two or three very friendly letters, for which I am indebted to you. It is so painful and injurious to me in general to write, and there are so few intervals,

in

in which I can muster up a little strength and a few spirits to write to my friends, that I need great candour and indulgence from them. Nor is it so easy on other accounts to me to write as it was formerly : in all respects, *non sum qualis eram*. But I hope all my friends are endeavouring to resemble our common Father and Friend, who accepts according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not ; who considers our frame, and makes gracious allowances for our infirmities.

I am sorry for the trouble and vexation you have had, and are likely to have, with your *eccentric fingers*. They are in general conceited, troublesome fellows, and have no more religion than an organ or a fiddle. And I wish the Doctor, when he comes to you, may be able to bring them to order. But steadiness and not yielding to them, is the only way to humble them. *Tu ne cede malis ; sed contra audentior ito*.

I would propose in the mean time, that you talk calmly and seriously to them *separately*, and endeavour to give them better notions than they have, of the *nature and design of psalmody* ; and particularly urge upon their consciences a reverence *for the presence of God* ; and how *affronting* it must be to him to have the church turned into a *theatre*, and divine worship into a *farce*. I know nothing more likely to shame and reform them.*

The

* All persons (says Archbishop SECKER in his second charge to his clergy) who are by nature qualified, ought to learn, and constantly join, to glorify Him that made them, in psalms and spiritual songs. This was the practice of the early Christians: it was restored very justly at the reformation: and hath declined of late, within most of our memories, very unhappily. For the improvements made by a few

The testimonies you have collected from the life of Mr. PHILIP HENRY, the writings of Mr. HOWE, and those of others, respecting the worth and piety of the ancestors of Mr. H***, of *Boreatton*, may be a proper present for the young gentleman, and will, I hope, be of service to him. To which you may add, what is said of the family in Mr. TONG's Life of Mr. MATTHEW HENRY, and in Mr. HENRY's funeral sermons for Dr. BENION and Mr. TALLENTS, who were Ministers at *Shrewsbury*. There is a dedication in one of the volumes of CRADOCK's *Commentary*, which is addressed to the four gentlemen, who married Lord PAGET's daughters, in which are several curious things; but as I have not the volume by me, I cannot furnish you with them. The *Boreatton* family hath been remarkable, through many generations, for its solid worth and serious piety.

I am glad you saw Lady ***** at *Bath*. A short interview with her now and then, when you can enjoy it, in passing, without appearing to force yourself on her notice, may be serviceable to you. But you have lived long enough in the world already, not to depend upon the promises of great people. "Surely men of high degree are a lie,"* is as true now, as it was in David's time, and the inference he drew, is equally wise and salutary, not to trust in them, but to make the most high God

few in church-music, were they real improvements, will seldom equal the harmony of a general chorus; in which any lesser dissonances are quite lost: and it is something inexpressibly elevating, to hear the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters and of mighty thunders, to speak in the words of scripture, making a joyful noise to the God of their salvation, and singing his praises with understanding.

* Psalm lxxii. 9.

God our friend and refuge, who will never forsake us. I can see no impropriety in your making her a present of my *Sermons to the aged*. I know not whether the author's being a dissenter would prejudice her against them. But this I know assuredly, that Sir Thomas **** often treated the author with great civility and respect, when he was in his company, especially about thirty years ago, at the time our county infirmary was just established.

The death of Miss WATSON of this town, was a very sudden and awful event. It was occasioned by a mortification in her bowels, brought on, as is supposed, by eating too many raisins on the preceding day. The family were greatly affected, but bore the calamity well. It fell peculiarly heavy on a young gentleman in *London*, of a most amiable temper and character, to whom she would have been married in a few months. He came down to the funeral, and shewed much of the spirit of a Christian, with all the feelings of a man, and the tenderness of a lover. I wrote to Dr. STONHOUSE an account of the circumstances of the case, addressed to his daughter, which I find he inserted in the Bristol newspaper; which if it doth good it is well.* I can.

* "—So speedily was this lovely flower cut down, in all the bloom of health and cheerfulness; and with the most agreeable prospects before her! So soon may *other* young ladies vanish from their parents and friends, and enter upon an *awful* eternity: So soon may all their schemes and views for *this* world be blasted at once! Those who are *unaffected* with such an *instructive* event as this, or can be soon *forgetful* of it, do great injury to their own judgment, and to the good education they have had. 'Tis to be hoped this *striking* and *sudden* removal of so *young* a person into the other world, will be the means of causing survivors to *ponder* on it, and to receive *instruction* from it; and especially to think now and then on that important text, so awfully illustrated by *this* and the *like* frequent events, (Prov. xxvii. 1.) "Boast not thyself of *to-morrow*; for thou knowest not *what a day* may bring forth."

I can read very little these short dark days, but I sometimes entertain myself with some of my good old authors. FULLER's *Holy State* hath afforded me much pleasure; in which there are many trifling things, but some lively remarks, and abounds with historical anecdotes, some of which deserve remembrance, and may pertinently be introduced into sermons, and be very entertaining and useful. He deals much in puns and gingle, but was a man of vast reading. He published several folios, as the *Holy State*, his *Church History*, (a large valuable folio) and another entitled, *the Worthies of England*, or the History of eminent men in the several counties where they were born. I read not long ago, Sir MATTHEW HALE's *Contemplations*. If you have them not, I would recommend them to your perusal. The style is awkward; but they are full of excellent matter, and would furnish out materials for many useful sermons. I have read them more than once or twice before, but never observed their usefulness so much in this view, as lately. Besides this, there is a variety of most excellent *Hints of Advice*, concerning a man's behaviour in every part of his *social* character; though they are only given as his thoughts, purposes and resolutions, with regard to his own *personal* conduct. He is a striking instance of the truth of that observation, which cannot be too often inculcated, or too carefully attended to, "that if a man allows himself to be imprudent, giddy and inattentive in *any one instance*, though it be in itself *small* and *inconsiderable*, it will have an unhappy influence upon his *whole* conduct; no fixed principle keeps him from

from being so in all *other* instances, and had he *equal* temptations, he would violate *all* the duties of prudence, and by degrees, those of morality and religion too." It is therefore peculiarly necessary, and of the utmost importance, that persons in their *early* years and *first* setting out in life, keep a *resolute* watch over themselves, even in the *smallest* instances, in which their natural temper leads them to be imprudent and indiscreet, and not neglect this *important* question, before they undertake even any little affair, "*Is it right and fit, prudent and proper ?*" I have read somewhere of a saying of the famous BRUTUS, that he looked upon that person as having been ill educated, or as having spent his youth very badly, who had not learned to say "NO" boldly.

— I am thankful, that I was led in *early* life to read so much *practical* divinity, and the lives and histories of *good* men ; as I can *remember* what I then read better than what I read yesterday, which is the case with most *old* people, especially if they have bodily diseases added to the natural decays of age. I have fewer and shorter intervals of what may be called ease than usual, and must expect them to grow shorter. I am a wonder to myself, that I have lived to see the *beginning of another year*. I cannot expect to see the *end of it*. May I employ the poor remains of life as well as possible ! I wish my infirmities may suggest *hints of caution* to my younger brethren and friends, to apply diligently to their Master's work, to be frugal of their *time*, and frugal of their *money*, as age and prior infirmities, may render them incapable of doing good, or filling up
stations

situations in which they might be comfortably supported. And the state of the world *at present* is such, that nothing can be more disagreeable and painful, than to be in circumstances of necessity and dependence, when every comfortable circumstance and accommodation is so desirable to lighten the burdens of life. Loss of time, and neglect of opportunities of usefulness, often oppress my spirits. Spending too much time about *trifling* books and studies, the contents and subjects of which I could wish entirely to have *blotted from my memory*, is a very painful circumstance. I mention what gives me uneasiness, that you may now avoid the like, and employ your health and money, your time and abilities, so as to leave no room for *painful* reflections hereafter. May God prolong your life, as much as his glory and your own usefulness and comfort may render desirable, and may the *close of it* have no bitter remorse, no uneasy sensations attending it ! Continue your prayers for me, and believe me to be, dear Sir,

Your sincere and affectionate friend,
and faithful servant,

JOB ORTON.

Besides LUCAS's *Inquiry after Happiness*, (as mentioned in a former letter) he published two volumes of Sermons, which I much admire ; and likewise a small tract, concerning the duty of Servants, with Advices, and Prayers for their use : but his principal work was a small treatise called *Practical Christianity*, or the Chief Design of the Gospel, which hath gone through many editions, and contains the substance of forty or fifty excellent

lent sermons, and is one of the best books I know for a young Minister, or indeed any person, to read a chapter of it daily.*

* I herewith (says Sir RICHARD STEELE) send you Dr. LUCAS's *Practical Christianity*, for your *serious* perusal. If you have *already* read it, I desire you would give it to one of your friends, who have *not*. I think you cannot recommend it better than in inserting, by way of specimen, these passages which I *point out* to you. Since I have a *soul* capable of happiness and misery, it naturally follows, that it were unreasonable to *lose* this soul for the *gain* of the whole world. For the soul is *I myself*; but if *that* be *miserable*, I must needs be so. *Outward* circumstances of fortune may give the world occasion to *think* me happy, but they can never *make* me so. Shall I call myself *happy*, if *discontent* and *sorrow* eat out the life and spirit of my soul? If *lusts* and *passions* riot, and mutiny in my bosom? If my *sins* scatter an uneasy shame all over me, and my *guilt* appals and frightens me? What *avails* it, that my *rooms* are *stately*, &c? See the *Guardian*, Vol. I. No. 63. for the remainder of this *striking* quotation.



L E T T E R X V I I .

July 28, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I AM willing to write to you once more, before you leave *Cheverel*, to go to your new living,† though I have nothing very particular to say to you. I was glad to see your Mother, as it gave me an opportunity of conversing with her about your settlement at *Wormington*; and she talked like a wise and good woman, and a tender parent. I really think it would be best for you, not to keep house there, *at least at present*. Cannot you contrive *to board* with some reputable farmer in the parish, in whose house you might have a room, and be accommodated with all necessities

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† *Wormington*, in Gloucestershire.

essaries at a cheap rate ? Thus you would live in a family way, and not find the ensuing winter so dull as it will be, if you are in your parsonage-house : and thus you will save money to furnish your house, when you see occasion for so doing. I have often heard Dr. DODDRIDGE and several other Divines say, that they lived very comfortably in farm-houses at their first setting out, and I should think it on many accounts desirable for you.* But of this you may judge for yourself.

I waited

* Extract from a letter of Mr. [afterwards Dr.] DODDRIDGE to a Lady of his acquaintance ; written soon after he went into the ministry.

July 15, 1723.

—Great revolutions have happened in my little affairs since I wrote to you last. On the first of *June* I removed from *Hinckley*, and am come to a small village in the neighbourhood of *Kibworth*; where I am settled, and have laid aside all thoughts of going to *Coventry*, though I have been much solicited to it since my coming hither. My settlement here is on some accounts very pleasant, but on others disagreeable enough. I board at a farmer's house; and as for eating and drinking we are well provided for, excepting the article of dear tea, of which, I am confident, there never was one drop drank in the house since it was built, unless it were what the garden and meadows afford. The master and mistress of the family are very good, plain sort of people; but *his* politeness extends no further than the team and the plough, nor *her's* than the poultry or the dairy; and they are so much taken up with these important affairs, that your poor friend has but little of their company. I am frequently alone twenty-one hours in twenty-four, and sometimes breakfast, dine, and sup by myself. I cannot say that this *eremitical* life is very agreeable to my natural temper, which inclines me to society. I am necessarily obliged to study hard, and if it were not for that my life would be a burden.

In what manner Mr. DODDRIDGE spent his time in this early period of his life, in such retired situations, will be seen by the following letter to his brother-in-law,† wherein he excuses himself for writing short humorous accounts of business.

Harborough, June 29, 1726.

Wednesday morning, eight o'clock.

Dear Brother,

I MAKE it a maxim with me, to write either to you or my sister, whenever an opportunity offers itself for that purpose. So that you have two or three letters from me, when other more exact correspondents have but one. You will not be offended then, that my letters are

† *The Rev. Mr. JOHN NETTLETON, of Ongar, in Essex, who died in the year 1734.*

I waited with impatience to hear from Dr. STONHOUSE, to learn the state of his own and his family's health. The letter I have received from him, like all other earthly intelligences and concerns, is counterchanged, and gives reason for a mixture of joy and grief. But he and I have lived so long to little purpose, if we have not learned to expect these mixed scenes, and not to be greatly moved by them; and especially to improve them to quicken our diligence, and improve our piety. He is gone with his family to spend some time at *Chester-House*, in *Northamptonshire*, which is a charming place for meditation, reading

are no longer; for you must consider, that I have a great deal of business which requires my daily attendance. I was up at five o'clock this morning, and have been all this while studying a part of the *Epistle to the Romans*, and writing letters. At this very time, DEMOSTHENES is waiting to entertain me with one of his Philippics; and VIRGIL is bringing back ÆNEAS to his camp, when I have long been in pain for his absence. Doctor TILLOTSON has prepared an admirable sermon, which he will deliver quickly in my chamber, with his usual grace and sweetness. And then GERRARD BRANDT, will go on with his History of the Persecution of the Remonstrants after their condemnation at the Synod of *Dort*. In the afternoon, I expect to hear from PLINY, who generally favours me with two or three epistles a day, though a stranger and an heathen, while you a Christian Minister and my brother, will hardly write once in a quarter. If I should be moderately transported with the joy of victory, or the grief and sorrow of a defeat; with love to Mrs. * * *, or anger against my antagonist, I hope to find my remedy in the conversation of Mr. BRAGGE, who has lately undertaken to teach me the government of the passions, which indeed I ought to have learnt some time ago. Dr. POTT is teaching me Grecian Antiquities. But I fear, I shall hardly have time to speak with him to-day. However, I will, if possible, attend upon my tutor CRADOCK in the evening, who is lecturing to me on the epistles, with great accuracy and solidity. Besides this, I have a kind of a short sermon to preach in the family, according to my daily custom, and three or four letters to transcribe into short-hand. Now I will leave you, who are one of the greatest clerks I know, to judge, whether all this business will leave me time to say any thing more, than how does my sister, with my service to her?

I am your affectionate brother and servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

See also Mr. ORTON'S *Life of Dr. DODDRIDGE*, page 21, 2d edition.

reading and devotion ; and there is no doubt but that he and Mrs. STONHOUSE will improve it accordingly. I heartily wish he may be free while there, from all disagreeable and impertinent company, and that his health may be greatly recruited by his recess. The Doctor wishes to leave *** entirely, and I trust Providence will direct him to some comfortable and useful settlement. I have desired him to remember the words of the poet :

Yet reason, while it forms the subtil plan,
Some purer source of pleasure to explore,
Must deem it vain for that poor pilgrim, man,
To think of resting till his journey's o'er.

I am glad I have no visitors like Mr. ***, no such *Bath* friends. I would not have them. They are not *friends*. While I am independent, I would not submit to such grievances and inconveniences, nor should my wife (if I had such an one as his). “What must we do?” they will say. Why break off all correspondence with such. Tell them (as I did at *Shrewsbury*, and do here) “I am old and infirm ; I will have my own hours. At them I shall be glad to see my friends, but they must come soon, and go soon, or not at all.” “But we can’t do this at ***.” Then I would remove to the land’s-end or to a Welsh mountain, and would not sacrifice such blessings as health, regularity, domestic comfort, and family religion, for any person or persons whatsoever. I am independent, and will be so. A few nights ago I heard some *weaver’s lad* singing a song under my window, of which I remember no more than this—“Let them say what they will, by Jove I’ll be free.” I have little company
and

and acquaintance. Ease and quiet, and an interview now and then with a worthy friend, bound my ambition. But I have a numerous and excellent society of prophets, apostles, and practical writers, especially BAXTER, BATES, and SCUDDER, with whom I have lately been conversing.*

Mr. DAUBREY I have seen formerly at *Shrewsbury*, and often heard of his character and worth from my father, Mr. PAINTER, of *Harley*, and others. He was master of the grammar-school at *Wolverhampton*, before Sir THOMAS WHITMORE (who was his scholar) gave him the living of *Stockton*.†

Your friends here are well. I shall be glad to receive a letter from you. There is no Dean or Bishop loves you and wishes you better, and would be glad to serve you in his way, than

Yours very affectionately,

JOB ORTON.

* —I have no connexions or acquaintance with great men ; and am happy in an obscure situation, where I can

————— with sage HOOKER's eye
See from my mother-earth God's blessings spring,
And eat my bread in peace and privacy.

Mr. MASON to the Rev. Mr. HURD.

† The editor well remembers this venerable and pious man, who died about the year 1760—full of days, and full of honour.



LETTER XVIII.

Sept. 23, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

IT gives me pleasure to find you are so comfortable in your new situation, and I heartily wish you success in it. I am afraid you find

your parish like the field of the slothful, and that you have much difficult work to root out, as well as to plant. But set about it vigorously and resolutely, and in divine strength, with earnest prayer for assistance and success, and God will prosper you. Methinks I would fain have you do something on each part of the Lord's day by way of exhortation. If you preach in the morning, expound in the afternoon one of the lessons, or the epistle and gospel for the day, in a short manner, with some practical reflections upon it. You will meet with sufficient help from your commentators, particularly from HENRY'S *Exposition*, and DODDRIDGE'S *Family Expositor*. This will be easier to you than making a sermon, perhaps equally useful to your people; and it will be a likely means to engage them to attend more regularly, when they have something more than the common service. Bishop BURNET strongly recommends long texts and short sermons, or, in our style, expositions: and this method of expounding some part of the scripture read in the service, hath been practised by many of the Clergy in former days, who were most eminent for piety and zeal.* I have just been reading again *Bishop BEDEL'S Life*, who was an eminently pious and good, as well as a very learned man. It is said of him, that every Sunday he *expounded the epistle and gospel for the day*. If you have never read that life, I would recommend it to you. In the

* See page 9 of these Letters. "It may be proper at other times to explain, in the way of sermons, the *Book of Common Prayer*, so far as it relates to the *constant* service of the church; for it is as necessary that people should *understand* the *devout use*, and *true* meaning of it, as that a soldier should *understand* the dexterous use of his weapons."

the latter part of the book is the best confutation of the tenets of popery, which I ever saw in so little a compass.

I am glad you have introduced psalm-singing into your church. I think your best way of carrying it on in an agreeable manner, will be to get some of your young men to your own house now and then, and to go over some plain tunes with them, until they can sing them perfectly ; and thus by degrees the rest of the congregation will learn them. Let not these young men sit together, but be dispersed properly over the church. I used this method with my young people at *Shrewsbury*; but I never attempted to teach them the grounds of musick, because I thought it unnecessary, and indeed because I was not capable of it. But they learned to sing such tunes, and in such time and method, that that part of the service was honourably conducted. By degrees you and they may learn some more, though I should think about eight common metre, six long metre, and two short metre tunes, would be enough. Probably some neighbouring parish clerk would come once a week to teach them for a small sum : but I think you can teach them sufficiently yourself. It will be adviseable for you to go to the *school*, and see how the children learn, and speak to and encourage them ; and to direct the mistress, privately, how to discharge her duty, and excite her to it. The presence of the Minister of the parish, now and then, will quicken both teacher and learners, and have a good effect. You will in the pulpit, and especially in private, excite the parents to be solicitous

licitous that their children may learn their books and catechism.

Dr. EVANS's *Sermons on the Christian Temper*, are I think on the whole, some of the best discourses I ever read for judgment, style, fulness of matter, regularity of thought and division, and coming home to men's consciences. I have lately bought a neat Scotch edition of them in duodecimo.

I have now good reason to believe, that my little tract on *Christian Worship* hath sold pretty well. You will, I know, join with me in thankfulness on this account, and in prayer that it may be further useful. The manner in which the DEAN of GLOUCESTER speaks of this undertaking gives me no small pleasure, and I hope his recommendation will introduce it into the hands of many who might otherwise never see it.

I have read Mr. JOHN WESLEY's *Address to the Americans*, and am much pleased with it. But I am tired with politics, and desire to be found among the quiet in the land. A worthy Minister in *London* writes to me in the following manner.—“ I wish I and my family were settled, at least for some time, with you, or in some obscure corner of the land, where I should hear nothing of what is passing in the world. For my part, I think both sides are mad, and trying which shall go the most desperate lengths. The question between *Great-Britain* and the *Colonies* I never entered into. I have much more important concerns to take up my time and attention than to engage in an affair to which I am very unequal. What the end of these things may be,

God

God only knows ; but it is high time to prepare for the worst." This good man speaks my sentiments fully. These things are little to me, who am going out of the world. I am sorry for you that are young, and for posterity. But the Lord reigneth : to his favour and blessing I commend you in all your interests and attempts to do good ; and am

Your affectionate and faithful humble servant,
 JOB ORTON.

L E T T E R X I X .

Feb. 8, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS glad to hear that you got safe to *Wormington*, through so many perils and difficulties by reason of the snow ; and perhaps with some misgiving thoughts for having left your flock so long and in so dangerous a time ; * as they never more need their pastor's watchful eye, and even his presence might be some restraint from excess. You will now however set yourself closely and diligently to your great work, and do them all the good in your power. I am pleased to find, that you received the box of books safe, which I desire you to accept ; hoping they will be useful to you, and consequently to your people. I could wish you would have Bishop PATRICK's *Comments on the Old Testament*, with LOWTH on the *Prophets* ; as likewise BAXTER's *Works*, always at your elbow.

You

* Christmas.

You have probably heard of the death of the EARL of RADNOR. Dr. and Mrs. STONHOUSE came home last Thursday from *Longford-Castle*, (his Lordship's seat in *Wiltshire*) extremely fatigued, having gone through great perils, owing to the depth of the snow, and the severity of the season. The Doctor gives an agreeable account of his patron's death; to whom, being called up in the middle of the night, he administered the sacrament, together with Lady RADNOR, some of his children, and servants, before he expired, with which he seems to have been much affected. Dr. HALE of *Salisbury* and Dr. STONHOUSE* attended him; and Dr. MOYSEY of *Bath* met them in consultation, but all medical help was vain. His Lordship had many excellent qualities in his character, and paid more regard to Christianity and practical religion, than I fear most of our great people now do. The Doctor intimates, that he had a strong sense of religion, and that he took leave of his family like a tender husband and father, and a sincere Christian.†

The difference of sensible persons in their judgment concerning our friend's late publication, is no way uncommon in such cases. I wish he would not mind their frivolous objections. Let him remember the story of the old man, his son and the ass. There is no pleasing every body,
and

* Dr. STONHOUSE was for two and twenty years physician to the county infirmary at *Northampton*, and in very extensive practice; which he was obliged to give up on account of his health. After which the EARL of RADNOR gave him a living;—and on his Lordship's illness, he in conjunction with Dr. HALE, acted in his *medical* capacity, which he never did after his having quitted his profession as a physician, unless to his parishioners, or when desired by some particular friend.

† His Lordship died January 28, 1776, aged 50.

and to attempt it is foolish.* A person once wrote to Dr. DODDRIDGE, (not with the greatest humility) on the impropriety and unsoundness of one or two of his positions in a publication. He knowing it to be vain and endless to enter into such particulars, only replied, *quod scripsi, scripsi*. The main concern of every Christian, especially every Minister, should be to please God: which whoever does, may set his heart at rest, whether he doth, or doth not, please man, yea, even his friends; nay, if he displease those whom he wished to please; nay, and doth it in the very point in which he hoped and expected most of all to please them. The ** has too much reason to complain of the unkindness of some of his more lukewarm brethren towards him. May God mend them; I cannot. Complaining will not avail, but only irritate ourselves and them, and tend to make us less thankful for the many, many comforts we enjoy. I have sent him the following lines.

The wise in secret always hide their pain,
And only where redress is sure, complain:
Contented rest with necessary ill,
And what they must submit to seem to will.
Whilst babbling fools, repining at their fate,
Their wants, their wrongs, their discontents relate;
And ign'rant of the make of human mind,
Solicit pity, where contempt they find.

I think RAPIN's *History*, considered as a History of *England* in general, and not of a particular period, is the best we have. His being a foreigner, makes it probable, that he was more impartial,

* "The judgment of the world is so whimsical and injudicious, and their favours so capriciously, absurdly, and most unjustly bestowed, as we may see every day, that if a man will fret at such things, he hath nothing to do but fret on, until death puts an end to his foolish sorrows."

partial, than a native Englishman would be likely to be. He is in high reputation as an historian as far as the revolution, where his history ends. TINDALL's *Continuation* is worth reading; but it is a tedious heavy work, and spun out merely to get money. The subscribers, of which I was one, thought themselves ill used and imposed upon by him. However, if it should come in your way, you may receive information from it. But for a short view of English history, of that period which is most important to us, I think none is equal to Bishop BURNET's *History of his own Time*; and, for a short abstract, WELWOOD's *Memoirs*.

As to my health, I am as comfortable as I can expect to be. Here is my state from an old writer: "Multâ cautelâ custoditur salus corporis; custodita, cito amittitur; amissa, cum gravi labore reparatur; et tamen reparata, semper in dubio est." I feel the meaning of this description. May my spirit feel the good effect it should have upon me! I heartily wish your increasing comfort and success in your great work. Now is the time, when you have little parochial duty, to apply closely to study, and increase your stock of critical, scriptural, and practical knowledge, that if Providence should call you out to a larger and more public station, and a greater sphere of usefulness, you may be qualified for it, and equal to it.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

and humble servant,

JOB ORTON.

LETTER

L E T T E R XX.

May 22, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

AS you have PALMER's *Abridgment of BAXTER's Reformed Pastor*, you can need no further advice from me about your parishioners. I think that book is *instar omnium* on the subject. You will no doubt call at every house in your parish, and make prudent inquiries into their state; whether they attend the church and sacrament, have prayer in their families, catechise their children, and take pains with their servants. It is easier to preach acceptably at such places as B **, than to converse intelligibly and profitably with country-families. A late author (I forget whom) saith, St. ANTHONY's *preaching to the pigs*, (according to the popish legend) was only *preaching to country-farmers*. But as the gospel is adapted to *them*, I pray God, you may be instrumental in carrying it to their hearts.

I do not think MACKNIGHT *on the Gospels* (though a very useful judicious book) will do for Mr. *** to read in his family. I make use of Mr. HENRY's *Exposition*, or Dr. DODDRIDGE's *Expofitor* in mine. When I read the latter, my family have their bibles in their hands, and I desire them to turn to that evangelist, whose account is most large in the section. Some persons read only the text and improvement in their families, as Dr. ADAMS, &c. What I say in my *Religious Exercifes*, (p. 144) is, "I would inculcate upon all families, where it can be performed, the

H

use

use of Psalmody :” and then I give my reasons ; meaning, where it can be performed *decently*, by a sufficient number, and capable of tolerable singing ; and *prudently*, on account of the situation and vicinity. Is there any thing to be objected to in this ? Mr. *** is mistaken as to what he says of singing *low* : it may be quite harmonious, and yet no louder than the common key of reading. One or two facts are worth a thousand theories and suppositions. I have always lived in families where singing was used. And I never found nor heard of any inconveniences attending the practice in my father’s family at *Shrewsbury*, though he lived in a narrow street, and which was the greatest thoroughfare in the town ; or in either of Dr. DODDRIDGE’s houses at *Northampton*, or at my own house at *Shrewsbury*, or many other houses here. One may have a worse opinion of men than they deserve. And let religious families first make a trial, and then proceed to drop the exercise as they find it convenient or otherwise. “ Let not your good be evil spoken of,” is an excellent rule. But if what is good in itself must be omitted for fear of that, there is an end of all goodness. A pious farmer of my congregation used to sing, as well as read and pray in his family. His reprobate landlord, who lived near him, hath come by with his rakish companions, and contrasted the psalm with a horse-laugh and an indecent song. The ’squire’s son, who is now a serious man, hath acknowledged to the farmer’s widow, that the conduct of his father and Co. shocked him when a boy ; and that the steadiness of the farmer and his consistent

sistent behaviour in all other instances, had a great influence in giving his mind a serious turn. When vice is bold, it is sad that virtue should be sneaking. Until I see or hear of some well attested instances, in which the credit of religion has suffered by singing in families, consistently religious, the passage must stand. See the preface, p. viii. ix.

It is many years since I read WATTS *on the Love of God*, and I have not the book now by me. Dr. WATTS's Treatises, Hymns, &c. on that subject do not suit me. He is too much of an *enamorado*, and this has been the sole objection I have heard against this piece. I do not love fulsome, luscious divinity. And the good Doctor allowed in his preface to Mrs. ROWE's *Devout Exercises*, that many of his composures in younger life were of that kind, which his maturer judgment disapproved. *The passions in our frame* should be consecrated to God, and it is desirable our devotion and love to him should be fervent; but as there is so much of the *animal* in them, and men have different constitutions and relishes, too much stress must not be laid upon them.

When I had the pleasure of seeing our friend Mr. **, I was afraid lest public concerns should have injured his health, or disturbed the composure of his mind. But perhaps, were we to decline attending to such concerns, and confine ourselves wholly to the duties of our families and functions, our minds might be ready to prey upon *themselves* for want of variety, and through a constant attachment to one track of thought and action.

action. While Providence has favoured him with almost every domestic comfort to so high a degree, and given him so much skill, reputation, and success in his professional capacity, it would grieve one to find, that his benevolent concern and attempts for the good of mankind impaired his health, or prevented him from relishing so many other enjoyments. Great caution and steadiness are necessary, that we suffer not in these particulars; and I have peculiar reason to give the hint to every friend I love, as I have suffered so much myself by not attending to it.

My two volumes of *Sermons on Practical Subjects*, were advertised a few days ago. I wish they may do good. The more I see of many modern sermons the less I like them; and the less I think they are calculated for usefulness. I would willingly write modern sense and accuracy, with the ancient simplicity, pungency, and evangelical strain.

I have just been perusing an account of the donation of a missal to a college of popish priests; under the title of which the donor had written, "When you read this, pray for the soul of A. B. who gave it." So I say in the Protestant sense at closing this letter.

Yours affectionately,

JOB ORTON.

KETTLEWELL was an excellent man, and there are many noble things in his devotional writings.

L E T T E R XXI.

DEAR SIR,

August, 1776.

I BEGAN to think it long until I heard from Mr. ***, who is visiting his friends in *London*. I was ready to suspect that the air of the metropolis had the same effect upon him that it hath upon most of my friends and correspondents who live within its influence. They reside in the centre of intelligence, relating to literary, political, and ecclesiastical affairs, whilst I am thrown into an obscure corner, out of the way and knowledge of any one of them. Yet I enter so deeply into the concerns of my fellow-creatures, that I am eager to know how the world goeth on: but they will not indulge my curiosity, though they can most of them do it fully in a quarter of an hour's time by the use of shorthand. I must therefore be content, and value those few, very few, real friends so much the more, who, like Mr. ***, reckon themselves in debt from the receipt of a letter until it is answered, and cannot be easy, until they have cleared the account. Indeed I can send them no intelligence from hence; it would therefore be more kind in them, by their correspondence, to make up the deficiency. I see more and more reason, the longer I live in the world, to apply to myself part of Dr. KING's epitaph: "*Amicos habui multos—sed gratos, fidos, stabiles, cheu! perpaucos.*"

I am obliged to Mr. ** for his remarks on my Sermons. He is a very worthy man, and for

whom I have a very sincere esteem and affection. The passage he objects to in the *play-house* sermon, page 292,* is a fact. Some exceptions of dramatic writers there undoubtedly are; such as ADDISON, YOUNG, HUGHES, and LILLO: but BEN JOHNSON, with several of his cotemporaries; and since them VANBRUGH, DRYDEN, STEELE, OTWAY, CONGREVE, FARQUHAR, CIBBER, &c. I will not except; nor even TRAP, and scarcely THOMSON. I have read the Lives of the Poets, and am, by their writers, confirmed in this sentiment. I am sensible there are those who will find fault with some expressions I have made use of. Let them. There is no avoiding it, if you will speak the truth. The fact is notorious; and in such a day as the present, softening expressions tend to defeat the intention. I think it my duty to speak my mind as clearly and strongly as I can; and while I have sufficient evidence that I am right, I do not fear consequences. This generation must be made to *feel*, if possible, else no good can be done upon them. It is well known, that the plays of the most moral dramatists are seldom acted; scarce ever in the country: and even some of these better sort of writers have shamefully inserted profanations of the name of God; which I can hardly reconcile with the character of a good man. But *valeat quantum valere potest.* †

There

* "It is generally allowed, that the very profession [of a player] is mean and sordid. The actors personate so many characters, that they have none of their own; or none but what are contemptible, &c." Perhaps the worthy author of this discourse has carried things in it rather too far.

† The connexion in which this note stands, is allowed not to be the most natural and easy; yet for the sake of the moral sentiment contained in it, the Editor ventures to insert it. "I had

There is a great deal to be learnt from Dr. CLARKE'S *Works*, and therefore they ought and deserve to be read carefully. I have most of them, and have often read them. His sermons, which I have lately gone over again, are all sensible and judicious; and he hath an excellent collection of parallel texts and good definitions of words and things; though with respect to the former, often more than is needful to explain his meaning. The applications of his sermons are too short, and want pathos. This he lamented himself, but could not alter his method, as his cool philosophical head would not admit that warmth and *unction* (as the French call it) which is very desirable in an application. He is much more evangelical than most of his admirers. His paraphrase upon the evangelists appears to me to drop short of the true design of the evangelists in many passages, but contain many excellent things. His translation and notes upon ROHAULT I have not read, since I was at the academy, but his other tracts I am better acquainted with. He, like many others, gives what I think a wrong idea of baptism, and lays too much stress upon it, and the circumstances of it. I find the same fault with some things in SHERLOCK'S

"I had a great intimacy with some of the most celebrated of the *Dramatis Personæ*, as DELANE WOODWARD, my school-fellow, Mrs. FRITCHARD, Mrs. YATES, Mrs. PALMER, who was Mrs. FRITCHARD'S daughter, and Mr. PALMER, her husband, a very genteel comedian, Mr. GARRICK, &c. But *where* are they *now*? *Where* their astonishing talents?"

Pulvis et umbra funus.

Oh, that people would in *this* view well weigh the contents of Dr. STONHOUSE'S Book.† To *their* complexion we must *all* come at last. And is *no* preparation requisite? —."

From a Correspondent.

† Every Man's Assistant, or, The Sick Man's Friend,

LOCK's book *upon death*, which I have lately been reading again with great pleasure, and I hope some profit. Dr. CLARKE's *Life* by Bishop HOADLEY is excellently well written.

I have procured the Bishop of CORK's* sermons, recommended to me by Dr. STONHOUSE, and have read several. His style is manly and easy; but as they are levelled principally against the Socinians, they are rather dry and controversial, than serious and practical. But I hope to be better acquainted with him soon, and that I shall find some things more plain and practical in the other discourses.† He was the author of a deep metaphysical treatise on the Procedure and Limits of the Human Understanding; which my understanding, being so limited, could never comprehend. He published likewise a small tract against the reigning toast in *Ireland*—"To the immortal memory of King WILLIAM," as if it were praying for the dead. The consequence of which was, that the Whigs there used to add to their toast—"in spite of the Bishop of CORK." I will send you his sermons when an opportunity offers for that purpose.

"What a world do we live in!" exclaims Mr. ***. Ay, in truth, it is bad enough; so our fathers, grandfathers, &c. since *Adam* found it. That is not a reason, as I tell him, why we *should not*, but why we *should*, endeavour to make it better; and never relax in matters of duty, conscience, and attempts to do good. I hope he will not be discouraged. "Do what you can, whether

* Dr. BROWNE.

† He is a very practical writer,

whether men will hear or forbear," is our rule ; and it shall turn to us for a testimony. May God keep up the ardour of our spirits, amidst so many chilling circumstances, and favour all our pious attempts !

The sudden changes of the weather have affected me much. This day se'nnight FARENHEIT's thermometer was at 76 ; yesterday and to-day at 56 and 57. What human frame but must be in some degree affected by so great a variation. My spirits this week have rose as high as alacrity : but when they get down to dejection and fear, it is very uncomfortable. With such changes and sensations God is pleased to exercise us poor mortals, " to make our hearts better." I wish I could more clearly see this end answering in my own case.

Yours affectionately, JOB ORTON.

Mr. WHISTON I once spent an hour or two with, and was much pleased to see and converse with the honest old man ; though I remember his great confidence displeased me. He was walking from *London* into *Rutlandshire*, where his son-in-law lived, and where he himself died, and he called and breakfasted at Dr. DODDRIDGE's at *Northampton*.



LETTER XXII.

May, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

IT gives me a very sensible pleasure to find, that my letter was agreeable to Mr. ***,
and

and any way contributed to alleviate his sorrows. To weep with them that weep, and to comfort them that mourn, are most amiable, as well as essential duties of our holy religion; and I have been so long in the school of affliction myself, that I hope I have learned, at least, these lessons in it: though I find, and much lament it, that, among many eager and florid professors of religion, there is a great want of sensibility and tenderness. Amidst their zeal for notions, terms, and phrases, there is something wanting to sweeten and soften their spirits, and open their narrow hearts to that compassion and feeling for others, which is the glory of the man and the Christian. In short, there are many brutes upon two legs; and woe to him, who is dependent upon them, or connected with them! I am somewhat concerned, that copies of my letter have been given to others, as it was written very hastily, from the fulness of a sympathizing heart; and I can hardly now recollect a thought or expression in it: but if it is any way helpful to my companions in affliction, I shall rejoice. If its contents had any thing of propriety and suitableness in them, it arose entirely from hence—that I was much affected with the occasion, and warmed with the subject: and the passions, you know, are always eloquent. I wish Ministers would attend to this thought; and see, that their own hearts be first deeply impressed; then they will speak as they ought—a word in season, both in the pulpit and in the parlour.

I have been reading Dr. CAMPBELL's *Fast-Sermon*, which pleases me much, and is, I think,
calculated

calculated to do great good.* I wish it were printed in a cheap form to give away among the people in general. Surely, some of our loyalists will be at the expense of doing this, when the patriots (as they call themselves) are at so much pains and expense to reprint, translate, and disperse Dr. PRICE's *Observations on Civil Liberty*. I shall recommend it to all those with whom I have any acquaintance. But I hope the nation is growing wiser, calmer, and more loyal. All my neighbouring brethren, as far as I can judge, are among the quiet in the land.

I attend to Dr. * * 's observation about the *Magdalene Hospital*. There is no evidence in the New Testament, that *Mary Magdalene* was a notorious sinner. On the contrary, she was a pious lady of quality, who had been troubled with an epilepsy, or some disorder, which the Jews used to impute to the agency of one, two, three, or more demons, according to its strength and virulency. Nor is there any proof, that *she* was the woman, who had been a sinner, and washed the feet of Christ. See DODDRIDGE on the place. Dr. LARDNER published a small tract to shew how absurdly the prostitutes' hospital was called the *Magdalene House*, and what reflection it threw on the name and memory of *Mary Magdalene*: but notwithstanding what he said on the subject, it continued to be called by that name.

——If the scheme of Redemption be represented, as Christ's prevailing upon the Father to shew mercy and confer favour to his creatures, who

* The Sermon referred to is on the Nature, Extent, and Importance of the Duty of Allegiance.

the writing contained in it, which is bad, especially when written in short-hand : therefore it is best, when you have gotten down to the bottom of the first page of your paper, to turn to the next, that is, the back of that, and not to go on obliquely, as you have done in this letter. Always take care to leave that part of the paper, where the seal is to be, *blank*, that the writing may not be torn. I had a letter from a friend lately, who desired me to transact a little business for him, which was the chief purport of his letter ; but he had unfortunately put the wafer on the most material part of the commission, so that I could not know what he had desired me to do for him. This you will say is an odd kind of an introduction to a letter : but I have heard worse, and less pertinent introductions to many sermons. I have often admired the character, which a great lady in *France*, once gave to one of the officers of that court—"that he was excellent at little things." There is more in this than most people are aware of.

I have sent you CHANDLER'S *Commentary*, which I wish you to read carefully, as it will enlarge your mind and ideas. He has some valuable criticisms, but they are not all equally satisfactory. I would not have you preach in his style and manner, but you will do well to imitate his strong sense and good reasoning in plainer language ; and there are some very excellent and striking remarks in his practical reflections.

I have read Miss MOOR'S *Essays to Young Ladies*, with which I am very much pleased ; as containing excellent prudential cautions, and ad-

mirable religious maxims. She writes so well, so usefully, and with such a strong tincture of rational and manly piety, that I would have every reader enter fully into her sentiments and advices, which are adapted to do much good.*

BLAIR'S *Sermons* are indeed very judicious, lively, elegant, and evangelical; but not sufficiently plain, I think, for common readers. I hope they will be of much service among the judicious and polite, who will probably be inclined to read them.

I had a letter lately from Dr. **: a part of my answer to which was as follows. "I have rode out several times this week; as I hope you have done. It is good for your health: it is also good for one's temper. I have often found the benefit of *this* receipt.

'Tis better, friend, to labour than to fret:
To cure the spleen, there's nothing like a sweat.
When times are bad, and neighbours never worse,
Men, manners to reform, come, take your horse.
A mile reforms them: but if aught remain
Unpurg'd, 'tis but to ride as far again.

I have lately lost a valuable friend here; which event has much depressed my spirits. I am just returned from an excursion into *Staffordshire*, about three miles off, and find my spirits better: so that I hope to be able to day to visit the afflicted widow and family."

——I am pleased and thankful, that I am quiet here, and that I can (as I think St. JEROM says) retire to my *Tugurium*, and bless God, that I dare sleep when I can, and say, that aught is my own; and there deplore my barren ministry
for

* Mr. ORTON wished there had been fewer French terms, and hard words made use of in these admirable Essays.

for thirty years almost ; and implore the blessing of Heaven upon the world and the church. I am better and worse, as to my health, as usual, but it never verges to the borders of being well. But when a man is turned of *sixty*, he must expect to sink and decay. Some noted writer of antiquity says, "It is unbecoming a man, when arrived to that age, to hold out his hand to a physician to feel his pulse. He should be content to march off the stage." I wish I could do more in the devotional way ; but I trust, that He who knows our frame, will accept a willing mind, and honest intentions to serve his sacred cause.

I am your affectionate

JOB ORTON.

I am concerned, lest you should injure your health by too close an application to your studies. Walk out often ; and when you write or read, be sure to keep yourself in as upright a posture as you can. Write upon an inclined plane ; but a standing desk is best. Nothing is more injurious to the health of young divines and students, than *stooping*.*

* "The attitude of a man at study, says Dr. TISSOT, cannot but be hurtful to health. The folds which the vessels are thrown into at the top of the thigh and in the bend of the knees, while a man is *sitting*, interrupt the circulation in the lower extremities, which in process of time must necessarily suffer from this circumstance ; the bending of the body constrains the abdominal viscera, disturbs their functions, and the digestive powers are disordered from a new cause. Frictions are also of much use, and not to be neglected. If every morning we rub the whole body, perspiration is encouraged, and the circulation quickened ; which is indeed so much accelerated by strong frictions continued for a long time, that in some degree they supply the want of exercise. The ancients, who were sensible of all the advantages resulting from this practice, not only used it as a remedy, but also as a daily method of preserving health."—Dr. TISSOT *on the Diseases incident to Literary and Sedentary Persons*, p. 65, 174, second edition.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

Nov. 20, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE a Miscellany to send you, and it is some comfort to me, that it will cost you nothing in postage.

I can make great allowance for the little indiscretions of Mr. ***, as he is so young a man. He knew the great sensibility and delicacy of Mr. **, and therefore should have said nothing of the business which he communicated to him. We must deal cautiously with persons of his great scrupulosity and exactness, and especially never divulge, or give the most distant intimation of what they wish to have concealed. It may appear to us a trifle ; but if it seems important to them, that is a sufficient reason why we should be upon our guard. And it is best always to err on that hand, and to be particularly solicitous not to utter every thing one may hear from a friend. We ought to suppose he speaks to us in confidence, though there may be no express charge or seeming desire of secrecy. If a person, for whom we have a great regard, shews us any particular attention, and concern for our service and interest, it is highly proper to thank God for it, and to shew them all gratitude ; but to say as little of it as may be to others. As Dr. FORDYCE's *Addresses to Young Men*, which I am reading, (in which, amidst great pomposity of language, and studied antitheses, there is much good sense, and advice suited to their case) and which now lie before

fore me, and your young friend may not have seen them, I will transcribe a passage from them which you may communicate to him or not, as you think proper.—“ From a consciousness of right intentions, from the honest ardour of their natures, from the apprehensive simplicity so incident to generous minds, they are apt to forget certain forms, ceremonies, and precautions. These, however small in themselves, have often a mighty stroke in the affairs of life, and especially go further, as they are observed or neglected, to escape or incur censure, to obtain or forfeit praise, than the inexperienced or incautious will easily conceive. It is much to be regretted, that some excellent spirits fail of appearing excellent in a number of cases, for want of these inferior attentions, which ought by no means to be omitted, &c.” Vol I. p. 101.

I am glad you are pleased with the small present I made you of my *Sacramental Meditations*. I wish for your prayers, that they may be instrumental in doing good. I think my printing work is now done.* I hope I am thankful for
the

* This was Mr. ORTON's last publication ; relative to which the Editor of these Letters begs leave to subjoin the following testimonies borne to it.

The late Rev. Mr. HUNTER, Vicar of *Weaverham*, in *Cheshire*, the author of several valuable publications, wrote thus of it to a friend : “ Upon your recommendation, I have ordered and repeatedly read Mr. ORTON's *Sacramental Meditations*. I think I never read a book better calculated for the purposes of spiritual improvement. The shortness of the sections, the plainness of the style, the clearness of the method, render it peculiarly fit for the reading and retention of the uninstructed in low, and the indolent in high life : whilst a flow of piety, an apt and happy application of scripture, an experimental sense of religion, and a profound knowledge of the divine life, and of the deep things of God, must recommend it to the perusal and approbation of those who have made the greatest progress in goodness.”

the acceptance, and I trust, usefulness, with which some of my publications have been honoured. Other authors have a more shining province, in learned, ingenious, and philosophical pieces; I am content with doing good to souls.

What will become of my Expositions on the Old Testament I know not. I fear the plan I proposed for interweaving them with CLARK'S notes, in the manner of WHITBY and DODDRIDGE, adding a practical improvement at the end of each chapter, will not be executed. I wish it may; but I can do nothing to it myself; and the person from whom I hoped for the execution will not, I fear, attempt it, though he hath strength and ability of body and mind to do it soon, and do it well. I must leave it to Providence, and those who may come after me.*

Dr.

DR. TUCKER, the present venerable *Dean of Gloucester*, wrote of it to the same person in the following manner.—“Pray thank Mr. ORTON for his book in my name. I am charmed, and I hope edified too with it; which I make my constant companion. As I read, I am delighted to find the great divine, and the able controversialist, concealing himself under the better character of the pious and humble Christian, and avoiding all the parade of human learning. A man who was less a scholar, and less a Christian, would have stuffed his book with a thousand quotations.”

The late excellent Dr. ADAMS, Master of *Pembroke College, Oxford*, in a letter to Mr. ORTON, writes thus:—“The design of your book was quite new to me, and is, I think, happily executed. In our large communions (such as I have often seen at *St. Chad's*) it is the very book I should wish in every one's hands. The *Dean of Gloucester* is much pleased with it; as he is indeed with all your writings. You have perhaps done more good of the best sort, under the necessity of retirement, than you could have done in better health, which universally brings dissipation along with it. This is a consolation of the highest and noblest kind, which I am persuaded you have a right to, and I hope God will in your weakest hours enable you to take to yourself.”

* MR. ORTON'S Expositions on the Old Testament, with devotional and practical Reflections, for the use of Families, are now publishing by the Rev. ROBERT GENTLEMAN, of Kidderminster, in 6 volumes octavo, and have met with great encouragement. The fifth volume of which was published in March last.

Dr. TAYLOR's *Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans*, is an elaborate and learned work, containing many excellent things, and many important and valuable criticisms, and well deserves your careful perusal ; but I think he hath too much limited the Apostle's sense. Few persons have ever studied the bible more than he, or have been better acquainted with scriptural phraseology ; but he was too much warped by his own theories. You will find many good remarks upon this performance in DODDRIDGE's preface to the second edition of his *Sermons on Regeneration*. His *Key to the Apostolic Writings* is prefixed to his paraphrase, and is designed to explain the chief phrases made use of in the Epistles ; but which he appears to me to have mistaken in many instances. Though I do not like his general scheme on the *Romans* and his *Key*, yet his notion of the doctrine of election seems right and scriptural.

I question whether Dr. DODDRIDGE's *Sermons against Popery* will ever be published. What the Doctor says of Mr. GROVE as a writer is, that " he resembles WATTS, but is not equally poetical ; that he has many judicious and new thoughts ; with great seriousness and sweetness." Bishop BURNETT's *Conclusion of the History of his own Times*, was printed separately in a small form a few years ago, and many of them sold. I scarce know a book better calculated to do good. HILDROP's *Miscellanies* are entertaining, and may furnish you with some materials in your addresses to your *Wormington* farmers. REEVES's *Apologies of the Fathers*, in two volumes octavo,

is a valuable translation of several important books. Have you ever seen *Short Meditations on Select Portions of Scripture*?* If not, I recommend it to you, as containing the substance of the heads and principal thoughts of about fifty excellent sermons.

Judge ASHURST is, I presume, of the same family as Sir HENRY and Sir SAMUEL ASHURST, who were both of them men of eminent wisdom and piety. Sir HENRY ASHURST wrote the life of Mr. NATHANIEL HEYWOOD, an ejected Minister of *Lancashire*; so fond was he of him.

Your advice to me to *eat my own book*, is very good. But I daily stand corrected by my own publications, as it is easier to give advice than to take it. The hot weather hurts me; and now this cool damp air hurts me again. So subject am I to skyey influences, and the sport of every paltry atom.† But be the weather fair or foul, the ship is still under sail, near the port: and may it be the haven, where I would be!

Yours affectionately,

JOB ORTON.

* By the Rev. DANIEL TURNER, of *Abingdon, Berks.*

† The Ascarides.



LETTER XXV.

DEAR SIR,

Feb. 1778.

THOUGH there is nothing in your last letter which requires an immediate answer, yet I am willing to write to so punctual a correspondent. I have

I have been looking over SALLUST's *History of Cataline's Conspiracy*; in which I think you will find some things suitable to your purpose, particularly in his speech to the conspirators; which you will meet with towards the beginning of the history: where he pleads liberty, as a ground for his undertaking; but mentions honour, power, wealth, &c. as also in their plan, and throws out some bitter reflections against the ministers and placemen of those days. *Quin igitur expurgiscimini? En illa, illa, quam sæpe optastis, libertas; præterea divitiæ, decus, gloria in oculis sita sunt, &c.* In my edition, is the following note on the word *libertas*. *Tacitus vere* (lib. 9. *Annal.*) *falso libertatis vocabulum obtendi ab iis, qui privatim degeneres, in publicum exitiosi, nihil spei, nisi per discordias, habeant.* *Grafw.* one of the variorum authors. There is a great deal to the same purpose in *Cataline's* speech, and in other parts of the history; but it is near forty years ago since I last read it, which was with the pupils at *Northampton*, in 1739. I have long thought there are many passages in the account of that conspiracy very parallel to the present case of our nation, between loyal men, and those who are called patriots, and who choose by a figure of speech, to call themselves Whigs. Many are angry with me, because I discountenance their disloyalty; but I despise their anger, as much as I dislike their principles and conduct. I would willingly be doing some good while I am here; and to promote loyalty, subjection and peace, is doing good. I think I have already softened some sharp spirits amongst us, at least brought them to hold
their

their tongues, or to be less confident. I shall be sorry to find that your neighbour Mr. **, exposes himself and his ministry by his politics. An ancient Bishop says, "What hath an ecclesiastic to do with politics?" Lend him PALMER'S *Abridgment* of BAXTER'S *Reformed Pastor*.

How can we be *guilty by nature*, according to Mr. ***'s ideas of original sin, since guilt is a consciousness of having acted wrong? Our guilt and misery consist in having sinned, or in consequence of our sins. *Jeremiah* calls children *innocents*. Jer. ii. 34. and *Christ* says, Except ye be converted and become *as little children*, &c. Matt. xviii. 3. I cannot reconcile these passages, and many more, with the high notions of some persons concerning the doctrine of original sin. What I understand by that doctrine is, (and which I take to be a fact) that as we are born with less perfect constitutions, so the passions are stronger and less governable, and thereby we are more easily led into sin. I have known so many instances in which persons have excused their sins and bad tempers, by pleading original sin, that I would be extremely cautious how I gave the most distant encouragement to such absurd and dangerous pleas. So likewise by *assurance*, I mean only a satisfactory evidence, removing all painful fears and doubts, though not every slight suspicion. See MASON on *Self Knowledge*, part 1. ch. xviii. and BENNET'S *Christian Oratory*, sect. 2. p. 569. "Mr. *** does not know the fact of the Spirit's sealing, comforting influence." The only difference between us is, that he thinks it cannot be particularly *known* to be the work of the Spirit,

it, though he allows it to be so. I think that in some cases it may be known. And the lives of some of the best and most rational Christians shew, that they thought they could distinguish between a divine impression, and the natural working of their own minds. Many texts I think encourage this thought, especially the following. *Rom.* viii. 16. 2 *Cor.* i. 22. v. 5. *Eph.* i. 13.

My *Book of Almanacks* is of no great consequence. The Almanack I make use of is WING's, which I think one of the best. There I keep a journal of the weather, and insert who preached the charity-sermons here and at *Shrewsbury*, and what was collected; also any particular occurrence relating to the town. I also make references in it to the birth-days of some of my friends, not that I may drink their health, but pray for them. I find it of some use to have recourse to this, as to dates and times. And it is as an amusement, and attended with some advantage to take a transient survey of past occurrences. I will give you a specimen of the memorandum of the last month.—“Feb. 5th, Mr. Y ** died—a friend of mine at W ***.—9th, The day sister S ** died—to be thankful for her piety and usefulness—and to pray for her family.—14th, My nephew B. S ***'s birth-day—to pray for him.—21st, Public fast.—23d, Mr. T ** died, one of my former hearers.—24th, J. S ***'s birth-day—to pray for him.—25th, W. S **, a relation of mine, died.” This is the diary I keep. Dr. DODDRIDGE, as far as I can recollect, (for I have not his diary by me) used particular marks for days well spent, ill spent, and indifferent.

But

But a person may easily contrive any thing of that kind for himself.

Bishop NEWTON's *Dissertations on the Prophecies* are excellent books, and will enrich your interleaved bible with many good interpretations. But his plan upon the Revelation is not, I think, the right one. He and Dr. HALIFAX, who lately published some discourses preached at Bishop WARBURTON's Lecture, both implicitly follow Mr. MEDE. When I was engaged in publishing Dr. DODDRIDGE's *Expositor on the Revelation*, I studied that book as carefully as I could, and I found more consistency and satisfaction in LOWMAN on the Revelation, than any other commentator upon it.

Mr. ROBINSON, the author of the *Plea for the Divinity of Christ*, hath not received a regular education; but is a man of a surprising genius, and vast application. He doth not appear to me to understand the controversy about the Trinity; and has misapplied several texts, which I have taken the liberty of pointing out to him. He frequently contradicts himself, being in some parts of his performance a *Sabellian*, while in others he seems to favour the *Athanasian* doctrine. In reality, I take him to be a *Sabellian*, or else I do not understand him. I wish none would meddle with that controversy, but those who understand it. I have read many treatises upon the subject, and some angry and uncharitable ones, whose authors did not understand it, but wrote without any clear ideas. I think Mr. ROBINSON's book will be useful, to shew the difficulty of the point, and to abate the confidence and censoriousness of many. Your

Your relations and friends here are well. I bless God I am as well as usual, but find old age gaining upon me by long strides. Continue your prayers for me, that I may be ready whenever the summons comes, and that all may be well at last. As a Scotch Divine said in his dying moments, so I would say: "If I do not come up to HENRY's glory, and WATTS's glory, and DODDRIDGE's glory, I shall be well, if I *win-in** among them."

Your affectionate friend, &c.

JOB ORTON.

* The expression of *winning-in*, is a *Scotticism*, and signifies to *get-in*, or rather to *gain-in*, among them. We use the word for *winning a prize*. So in our translation, *that I may win Christ*, κερδεσαι *gain Christ*, as a treasure, or something extremely valuable. *Phil. iii. 8.*

LETTER XXVI.

Sept. 20, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

IT is common for the lawyers, when they prefer a bill in chancery against a person, to crave leave of the chancellor to mend the bill. This I will endeavour to do with relation to my letter of yesterday; which I wrote in a hurry, as I was not willing to make the messenger wait.

—I wish your friend Mr. ** may have an opportunity of reading a discourse, written by Dr. WISHART, Principal of the College of *Edinburgh*, on the *Inefficacy of a Death-Bed Repentance*, or some such title, as it is an excellent piece: or, a sermon of Mr. NEWMAN's (late
K Minister

Minister of *Carter-Lane, London*) on the *Case of the penitent Thief*, which is a very judicious discourse. As to *visiting condemned malefactors*, it is very proper: for even a good man may be hurried into some capital crime; or repentance may begin immediately after the fact: at least, it is doing the best that can be done to alleviate future misery; and every thing should be tried, when eternity is near. There are some excellent reflections on such scenes in Archbishop TILLOTSON'S Two Sermons on the Long-suffering of God, from *Ecclesiastes* viii. 11. particular at the end of the first sermon. And I am much of his mind on this subject.*

Have you seen an *Essay on the Connexion between the Doctrine of Justification by the imputed Righteousness of Christ, and Holiness of Life* (wrote by WITHERSPOON, a Scotch Divine, and author of the *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*) dedicated to Mr. HERVEY? It was sent to me several years ago,

* "To speak my mind freely in this matter, (says the Archbishop) I have no great opinion of that extraordinary comfort and confidence which some have, upon a sudden repentance for great and flagrant crimes, because I cannot discern any sufficient ground for it. I think great humility and dejection of mind, and a doubtful apprehension of their condition, next almost to despair of it, would much better become them; because their case is really so very doubtful in itself. There is great reason for the repentance of such persons, and it becomes them well; but I see very little reason for their great comfort and confidence, nor does it become their circumstances and condition. Let them imitate, as near as they can, the behaviour of the penitent Thief, the only example the scripture hath left us of a late repentance that proved effectual, who gave the greatest testimony that could be of a penitent sorrow for his sins, and of his faith in the Saviour of the world, by a generous and courageous owning of him in the midst of his disgrace and suffering, when even his own disciples had denied and forsaken him; but we do not find in him any sign of extraordinary comfort, much less of confidence; but he humbly commended himself to the mercy and goodness of his Saviour, saying, *Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.*"

ago, by a gentleman of *Glasgow*, to whom I was a stranger. I think it an admirable book : and, though I do not altogether approve of its title, yet I am much pleased with his reasoning, as equally strong and conclusive upon our ideas of redemption. It is a twelve-penny pamphlet, and I imagine you will be much pleased with it.

Had you looked into the *Map of Oxfordshire*, you would have found *Tackley*, the seat of the Lady DOWAGER LICHFIELD, where our friend is lately gone. Let me advise you never to hear or read of a village, especially a market town, without examining where it is. Thus, much useful knowledge may be gained by degrees, and with little or no trouble. By taking this method, I have been of service to many tradesmen and others, both at *Shrewsbury* and this town. I wish you through the hurries of the day at ****. Remember the story I told you of an old Scotch Divine, who being asked why he wore a long beard, answered, " I do it to remind me never to do any thing inconsistent with the gravity of my appearance."

On Thursday last, as I was sitting at dinner, I felt an *earthquake* ; and heard a rumbling noise, like a wheel-barrow going over some rough ground. It happened at one o'clock, and lasted about two seconds. Many others in the town felt it, and some were much alarmed. I wish such alarms may do good. But we seem to be proof against every thing that is serious, kind, and awful.

I am now reading an excellent old book, written by OBADIAH SEDGWICK, who was a member

ber of the Assembly of Divines, entitled, *The Anatomy of secret and presumptuous Sins, &c.* which pleased me much. His heads and enlargements are short and comprehensive, and free from the unprofitable jargon of those days; and his language is excellent for the time he wrote in. If you meet with any of his works, it will be worth your while to purchase them, as they may be bought for a trifle. They contain excellent matter, and come home more to men's consciences and bosoms, than the writings of many of our modern Divines.

I am but indifferent, and am often unfit for business or company, and my mental powers daily grow weaker. When I am disposed to be impatient, I think of two of my acquaintance, who are ground down with the stone, and labour after greater patience and thankfulness. But every disagreeable object appears formidable and dreadful to me, especially, the near approach of death. I much need, value, and desire the prayers of my friends.

Yours sincerely,

JOB ORTON.



LETTER XXVII.

Jan. 1779.

DEAR SIR,

BEING confined to-day by great rain, I know not how to employ my time better than in writing a letter to you; though whether I shall be able to finish it to-day in time for the post

post I know not : however I will do something towards it. I am always glad to receive *chit-chat letters*, as they seem to come from the heart. Mr. POPE is I think right, who somewhere says, "The letters of friends are not worse for being fit for none else to read. The effusion of a moment ought to be the characteristic of all familiar writing. It is a strange recommendation, but a true one." In this view, I had rather write twenty letters to a friend with whom I can be free, than one to a person every way as good and valuable, and with whom I can be equally free, who is at the same time formal and accurate himself, and expects the letters of his correspondents to be so too. I do not love to write letters where compliments and apologies are necessary. Every thing that comes directly from the heart, and seems like conversation, is most agreeable to me. And indeed what is writing letters, but a kind of conversation, and therefore ought to be easy, free, and unreserved. Perhaps I am selfish in this sentiment, as I can seldom write more than a few lines at a time without being tired and in pain, and forced to lie down upon my couch ; so that method and order must be neglected by me ; but these I think should be easily excused in letters, especially where the writer's heart and his esteem for his correspondent appear at first view, without any labour or study.

I hope you have received the BISHOP OF CHESTER's *Letter*,* which I returned to you some time ago ; which is an exceeding good one,

K 2

truly

* A Letter to the inhabitants of *Manchester*, *Macclesfield*, and the adjacent parts, on occasion of the late earthquake in those places.

truly serious, full to the purpose, and adapted to do good. His Lordship's two sermons, which were preached at the Chapel Royal, *St. James's*, are superexcellent. They were printed, as I have been informed, by the express command of the Queen, in order to be given away among the courtiers.

I am glad you have so tolerable a *stock of sermons*. But you will go on composing new ones; as thereby you will increase your theological knowledge: a new subject always strikes, and the natural love of novelty should be called in to the aid of religion. What hath a Clergyman to do but to give himself wholly to his work; increase his own, and his hearers' acquaintance with the scriptures; and be continually drawing, from that inexhaustible fountain, streams of living water, for their entertainment and nourishment. How few are there among us, who like DANIEL WHISTON, the professor's brother, left behind him several hundred sermons, which he had never preached. This is the other extreme. I will excuse your having a sermon to write on the Saturday, because the occasion of it was urgent and necessary; else I should blame you, if ever you have a sermon to make, on a Saturday. Dr. DONNE (as it is said in his Life) always chose his text, for the next Lord's day, on the preceding Sunday evening, when he had finished the duty of that day. This was *my* method. I always contrived to have Saturday as a kind of leisure day, to attend at the Infirmary at *Shrewsbury*, or to do other business which (being market day) it occasioned; and that I might, by exercise and
relaxation,

relaxation, get myself into better spirits for the labours of the Sabbath. Only on a Saturday evening, I carefully reviewed my sermon, and committed the most striking parts of it, especially in the application, to memory. And I always spent my Saturday evenings at home, that I might prepare myself the better for the business of the following day.

I heartily wish you the return of many happy *birthdays*; and that each of them may afford you increasing pleasure in your own improvement, and the advancement of religion by your ministry. I have no doubt but you spent the day *religiously*; in thankfully acknowledging the goodness and mercy of God to you; in acts of humiliation for the vanity of childhood and youth; and in forming good resolutions for greater seriousness, diligence and activity, as a Christian and a Minister. May God hear your prayers, accept your praises, and multiply his blessings upon you!

I am now reading MICHAELIS's *Introductory Lectures to the Sacred Books of the New Testament*, a small octavo volume, price three shillings. It is a good concise account of critics, commentators, and their sentiments on the genuineness, authority, and inspiration of the books of the New Testament. It will refresh your memory with many things on those subjects; but he doth not enter deeply into the controversies of them.

I have lately bought a Scotch edition of FLAVELL's *Works*, in eight volumes, octavo. The folio edition I had before; but this I can read as I lie on my couch, or as I sit in my chair, smoking my evening's pipe. I have read more
of

of FLAVELL, since I was able to read at all, than any other writer; and I am always pleased with his plainness, simplicity, short style, great seriousness, and entertaining stories.

I am concerned that Mr. ** doth not apply more diligently to his studies: and it really grieves me to see young Divines, who have good natural abilities, and have enjoyed considerable advantages in their education, contented to *glimmer*, when, with more application, they might be burning and shining lights in the church, and the distinguished ornaments of Christianity and their profession. I sometimes talk freely to my younger brethren on such topics; but in this age, young men do not in general choose to attend to the most friendly advice of their seniors; though delivered, not only tenderly, but respectfully. They are wiser, and have better ideas of divinity, especially, than those who have grown grey in study and in the ministry.

I think I have now written every thing I had to say to you—which has been done at many sittings—and I have considered myself as talking with you. But this wet day makes me uncomfortable, and my letter is as dull as the day: yet fair or foul—bright or dull, I am your faithful and affectionate

JOH ORTON.

Some time ago, I recommended to the consideration of a friend, the following axiom, or definition of the use of a Right Line, *Rectum est Index sui, et obliqui*: which I think a maxim well worthy the attention of Divines. Inform your hearers what you think to be right, and shew them

them why it is so. By this method they will be able to judge for themselves of the differences of things, and perceive what is right, and what is erroneous. See *Luke* xii. 57. I wished to find some authority for it, and lately met with it quoted in the most learned Dr. CUDWORTH's *Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, which gave me singular pleasure.



L E T T E R XXVIII.

March, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I ACKNOWLEDGE myself in your debt for two letters ; which, on account of the indifferent state of my health, I am obliged to answer as I can, writing a few lines at a time, as I find myself disposed, without any regard to order or method.

I am sorry you meet with difficulties and discouragements in your present situation ; but I am in doubt what to say concerning a removal to S***. I could wish you comfortably settled in a living of your own, where you would be more extensively useful ; but am fearful you will find inconveniences in the place you think of ; except you can fully resolve, and keep your resolution, to mind your proper business, and to guard against the avocations of S***. I think a Clergyman is most respectable, who keeps to his study and parish, and engages as little as may be in mixed company. He should be careful not to
desecrate

desecrate himself by letting himself down. Have you ever read SCUGAL's *Works*, author of that tract which Bishop BURNET published, called *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*? If you have not, pray inquire after it, and read it diligently and repeatedly. Give me leave to send you the following passage from his *Concio ad Clerum*.—*Quotidiana clericorum cum laicis conversatio, contemptibiles eos reddit. Facile contemnitur clericus, si prandium invitatus sæpius veniat.* You will think of these maxims, and let them have their proper influence with you. SCUGAL was an Episcopal Divine, and son of a Scotch Bishop; a man of eminent learning and piety, and a good model for useful preaching; but died very young. May God direct you in all your motions, and fix you there, where you may do Him and his cause the most signal service! I know you will follow providence, and not out-run it; and I hope look to probable, though remote, consequences, before you determine upon so important a change in your situation.

I am glad to hear from you so good an account of Dr. ADAMS, whom you have lately seen. There are few men I honour more for every amiable quality. If you return to college soon, I desire you to present my respectful and affectionate compliments to him; and be sure to do all you can to learn of the Doctor steadiness, prudence, firmness, mingled with the utmost good-nature, and readiness to serve others.* I have

* In 1770, Mr. ORTON wrote two pamphlets, in defence of Dr. ADAMS, in answer to a Letter to the Doctor by the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, entitled *Diotrephes admonished*, and *Diotrephes-re-admonished*:

have nothing to say about your academical studies and degree, but that I hope you will purchase to yourself *a good degree*, and great boldness in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Tim. iii. 13) and be Master of the best Arts, that of saving souls.

I am going over JORTIN'S *Sermons* again—of which I am never weary ; so plain, sensible, and judicious are they : though I sometimes suspect, that some of the sermons were not his own, as they are so different from others of them, which correspond more exactly to his way of writing in his tracts and other publications.* But they are all worth reading again and again ; and I am persuaded those, which are most easy and familiar, were his own, for that is an excellency in his style, and almost peculiar to himself. Such sermons want nothing but a little more practical and lively application to make them complete models for young Divines. There is strong good sense and just reasoning in his discourses, generally couched under the plainest language. But he had,

in which the writer appears to have steered in a middle way between the Doctor and his antagonists, respecting some theological niceties and distinctions. The author of them hoped the controversy had done good, by exciting a spirit of inquiry into the contents of the Gospel, and leading many to read and think on religious subjects, who otherwise would not probably have done it. And he had the pleasure of hearing, that his tracts had been serviceable in this respect, especially in *Shropshire* ; and that they were much valued by many respectable Clergymen, particularly those of evangelical principles.

Another masterly pamphlet appeared in the same controversy, entitled, *The Church of England vindicated from the rigid Notions of Calvinism* ; written by one of Dr. ADAMS'S intimate friends ; whose name, were it to be made public, would do honour to the cause of learning and rational piety.

* See the Gentleman's Magazine for Nov. 1784.

had, as I have been told, a very heavy delivery.* I shall be glad to hear from you, and hope for a continuance of your prayers, that as my day is, my strength may be. My head begins to fail, my tongue stammers, my hands tremble, and I am sinking apace to the dust; but my concern for my friends, and the interest of religion, holds out still. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you! To that I heartily commend you in all your interests; and am, dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate

JOB ORTON.

* "JORTIN, as a writer, (says Mr. ORTON) is laconic, comprehensive, yet quite plain and easy, familiar and lively. I should like him better if he were more evangelical. But I can taste what I think an excellency in a writer, though I should on no account preach in his unevangelical manner. There are so few evangelical writers among the moderns, who are candid and catholic, that a man, who reads none but them, will be likely, though he may be confirmed in his orthodoxy, to lose his charity, and lessen his usefulness."

Here the Editor finds it necessary to discontinue these Letters; as soon after the date of the last, he came to live at *Shrewsbury*; and there are many things in Mr. ORTON's future correspondence with him, of a *local* and *too delicate* a nature to be laid before the public eye. This valuable man died July 19, 1783, in the sixty-sixth year of his age; and was buried, agreeably to his own request, in St. Chad's Church, *Shrewsbury*. *Sic mihi contingat vivere, sicque mori.*

THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED:

AND THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE HAD

IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE.

THE END.









